Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

ABC Childcare
09DL0100

Finn Valley Enterprise
Letterkenny Road, Lifford
Co. Donegal.

Date of inspection: 10 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

ABC Childcare is a long established community service which operates under the management of the Lifford Clonleigh Resource Centre in C. Donegal. It is housed in a modern purpose-built centre and provides a sessional preschool service in the morning and an afterschool service. On the day of inspection there were 3 practitioners and 17 children present. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting will be found in the appendix of this report.

AREA 1
QUALITY OF CONTEXT TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

• The quality of the context to support the children’s learning and development is excellent.
• The warm, caring and responsive relationships and interactions observed throughout the session are noteworthy.
• Practitioners use calm, soft and quiet voices at all times and effectively model pro-social behaviour for the children.
• Practitioners know each child and their family well and show respect for the uniqueness of each family through discussions with the children about events at home throughout the session.
• The service is well connected and integrated into the local community and hosts many visitors which include parents, the fireman, librarian, local gardening group and the local primary schoolteacher of infant classes.
• Many examples of very positive relationships and friendships between children were observed throughout the day.
• An effective key person system is in place which supports strong positive links with families and daily planned, shared activity times for key groups of children.

Action advised
• To further extend the children’s development of identity and belonging, practitioners are advised to provide photos/displays of the children, their families, visitors, events and the local community at child level in the room or in display books.

AREA 2
QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

• The quality of the processes to support the children’s learning and development is very good.
• The indoor learning environment is logically laid out and well resourced.
• The value placed on and daily use of the outdoor space to offer a variety of physical challenge, appropriate risk and learning experiences is highly commendable.
• Medium and short-term planning systems are in place and practitioners are beginning to incorporate the four broad themes of Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework into their curriculum planning.
• Play is central to children’s learning and development and practitioners are very supportive of children’s individual needs within play activities.
• Many children displayed a keen interested in early mark making and name writing.
• A “Developmental Book” is maintained for each child and comprises of anecdotal notes, photographs, the child’s explanation and description of their engagement and play and creative art samples. There is a very strong use of the voice of the child and these books are shared with parents at end of year.

Actions advised
• To further support the children’s emergent interests, increasing opportunities for early literacy and mark-making is advised as is the introduction of writing materials, books and real reading materials into interest areas.
• Practitioners are advised to begin to move to a more emergent curriculum by making greater use of Aistear and by incorporating observations of children’s current interests into planning for learning activities.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
• Children are focused and engaged in their play and activities throughout the day and display enjoyment in their learning.
• Children are offered significant freedom and choice throughout the session both indoors and outdoors.
• The children’s confidence, competence and co-ordination in their gross motor skills are very well developed.
• The children’s social and personal skills are well developed. The children were observed to turn-take, negotiate, play and interact respectfully.
• The children demonstrate high levels of independence and self-care skills particularly at lunch and clean-up times

Actions advised
• Further provision of opportunities for children to develop independence and self-care skills such as introducing a jobs board and allocating each child a job each day, is advised.
• To support children to reflect and make connections with previous learning experiences, it is advised that practitioners begin the adult-initiated activities by discussing children’s experiences and current knowledge of the topic.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• The team is well established and works efficiently and effectively. A system of monthly supervision is embedded in team working practice.
• Team meetings are held weekly and all practitioners are encouraged to take leadership roles. Positive team work was observed during the inspection.
• The service is making great efforts to link with local schools to support children’s transitions. Practitioners accompany the children on a visit to a local school each year.
• An open day is held each year and parents are given a comprehensive folder on the service’s policies and procedures. There is scope to provide more comprehensive information on the curriculum.

Actions advised
• Sending each child’s “Development Book” home more regularly is advised so that families have time to explore and celebrate their children’s learning. The provision of a space in the book for parent/family feedback would be helpful.
• It is advised that a curriculum statement be developed and included in the information folder for parents and displayed in the hall way.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the staff to implement the actions advised above is very good.
### Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Quality of context to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Excellent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Very good</td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Good</td>
<td>Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fair</td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor</td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to address the actions advised in the inspection

The service welcomes the advice on how to enhance the quality and care we provide for our children and their families. In order to best utilise the advice, we intend making the following changes to build upon quality within the setting:

• At present, we provide a large range of activities to develop the children’s identity and belonging, and in future we will document them better with the use of low level photo displays that both our children and their families can view easily.

• In order to further support children’s emergent interests, and increase opportunities for literacy and mark making, we have introduced mark-making tools into more interest areas and have also provided the children with magazines that are of interest to the areas such as home décor and recipe books in the home corner/kitchen area. We plan on making mark-making tools more widely available throughout the areas and are planning to introduce a mark-making cupboard to our outdoor area that will be easily accessible to the children when playing outdoors.

• We are also actively seeking Aistear training for all staff to build upon and refresh existing knowledge of the Aistear curriculum. We hope that this will make us more confident in linking our observation process to the learning aims of the curriculum and inform our weekly and long-term plans.

• We plan to introduce a jobs board for the children starting in September to enable each child to have a special job daily rather than weekly.

• We plan to send children’s development booklet home at the end of each term rather than at the end of the year. We hope that this will enable the children and their families to get more enjoyment from them and provide an opportunity for the children’s parents to contribute more to them.

• We are currently working on a feedback form for parents to fill out termly that will enable them to share information and comment on children’s achievements to date. This form will then be added to the children’s development booklet and we hope that this will build upon our strong links with families.

• It is our aim to have a curriculum statement in place for when our new children start in September and this will then be added to the information packs that we provide parents on enrolment day.

• In order to visualize our daily routine for all children and make it easier to understand for children with communication difficulties we intend on making a photographic timeline of our daily routine available at the children’s level.

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