Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Barney’s Playschool
09KE0015

Jigginstown Park, Naas
Co Kildare

Date of inspection: 03 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Barney’s Playschool is a home-based playschool operating for nineteen years in Naas, Co Kildare. The playschool has eleven children enrolled on the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. A total of 6 children and 2 practitioners were present on the day of inspection. 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 children’s learning and development is very good.
• The atmosphere of the setting is warm and welcoming, with time for parents each morning to connect with practitioners and to support children’s transitions from home.
• The setting adopts a very effective play-based approach with a daily plan for two hours of combined indoor and outdoor free play.
• The relationships between practitioners and children are positive. Children are consulted in relation to play equipment, the areas in which they wish to play, and the positive behaviour strategies that are very evident in the setting.
• Snack time is used very effectively to promote the children’s organisational and social skills. The children participate in setting the table and routinely eat a snack together which is provided by the service.
• Times of transitions between activities are very effectively guided by adult verbal direction with children contributing towards cleaning up activities.

Actions advised
• It is advised that practitioners exploit further the potential of snack time to promote health and well-being through encouraging the children to select from healthy food options.
• To further support transitions between activities, it is advised that practitioners include visual cues to help the children to recognise when it is their turn to help with and/or organise tasks.

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

• The quality of processes to support children’s learning and development is very good.
• A play-based curriculum informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education is used very effectively in the playschool.
• The practitioners make links to Aistear and Síolta, and prepare long-term, medium-term and short-term plans. Reference to children’s interests inform the topics selected. The resources required to support children’s interests are carefully planned and documented.
• A very good range of assessment approaches is used to gather information about children’s learning and development. These include individual child observations, documented links to Aistear, and a floor book with learning stories. Information from the assessment approaches used could be more directly and more consistently used to inform the next steps in children’s learning.
• Practitioners know the children well and their interactions with the children are supportive, caring and used effectively to broaden children’s thinking and development.
• Play is central to children’s learning and development with a variety of play types and opportunities for children to plan and interact with other children.
• The indoor and outdoor environments provide a variety of materials and equipment that support children’s play, curiosity, imagination and multi-sensory learning experiences. The storage of the large quantity of materials and equipment indoors reduces the space and opportunity for sustained play and for children to follow their interests.
Emergent language, literacy and numeracy are very effectively supported through the opportunities provided for the children to explore a variety of books, use open-ended materials, engage in mark-making and by the practitioners’ facilitation and extension of children’s discussions.

**Actions advised**
- It is advised that practitioners examine the information available from the variety of assessment approaches they currently use to see how it can be used more effectively to identify and inform the next steps in the children’s learning.
- The development of a system for rotating the materials and resources used in the indoor environment is advised in order to facilitate children in sustaining play and to maximise the space available to them in which they can follow their emerging interests.

**AREA 3**

**QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Children are very effectively engaged in and enjoy their learning experiences.
- Children confidently discuss their achievements and interests such as making playdough, discovering space and interpretations of their creative art.
- Children are developing a positive sense of identity and belonging. Links to the community, for example, the Garda, are photographed and documented. Greater pictorial representation of the diversity of children’s families would further support the children’s sense of identity and belonging.
- Children’s communication is very effectively supported through opportunities for verbal discussion, creative activities, role play and imaginative play.
- Children demonstrate interest and curiosity in their chosen activities and they enthusiastically explore and discuss their learning experiences.

**Actions advised**
- It is advised that practitioners document the children’s personal interpretations of their artwork in order to support the children’s creativity and to develop their awareness of their learning experiences.
- To build on existing strategies to support identity and belonging, it is advised that visual representations of the children’s families and the local community be developed.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- Very commendable partnership between practitioners and shared leadership are evident in the setting. The practitioners’ practice of weekly and daily discussions and their documenting of priorities and plans effectively support their professional reflections.
- Practitioners avail of opportunities for continuous professional development and make commendable efforts to connect new learning to practice.
- The practitioners very effectively foster communication with parents and families through, for example, incidental conversations with parents and carers and invitations to share documentation relating to children’s learning and development.
- Transitions to primary school are supported for children with special and additional needs.

**Actions advised**
- To further support professional development it is advised that the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide be included in training updates.
- The extension of strategies that support children’s transitions to primary school is advised.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the practitioners in this setting to implement the actions advised is very good, as evidenced by their commitment to reflecting on practice and their engagement in discussion during the post-inspection meeting.
### 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>Very Good</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</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>
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<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
Practitioners will encourage different healthy snack options at break-time for the children to choose from.

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to address the actions advised in the inspection report
A system is in place to rotate equipment and to provide more floor space for the children for their play. A more visual way to represent the children, their families and the wider community will be in place to promote more the theme of Identity and Belonging in the setting.

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