Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Cuffesgrange Pre-school
09KK0070

Churchill National School
Cuffesgrange
Co Kilkenny

Date of inspection: 10 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Cuffesgrange Pre-school was established in 2005 and is located in Churchill National School, Co Kilkenny. The setting is governed by the school board of management and the day-to-day running is led by the pre-school manager and one other practitioner. It offers a morning session for seventeen children in total all of whom participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Sixteen children were present on the day of the evaluation. The pre-school has recently relocated to a new room within the primary school. The practitioners adopt a play-based approach to children’s learning and development. The setting was given the opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report; the setting chose to accept the report without a response.

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 very good.
- A warm and caring atmosphere is evident where respectful relationships with children are nurtured.
- Practitioners demonstrate positive regard for children and parents in their interactions with them.
- Secure and authentic peer relationships are fostered and a strong sense of community is evident in the room. Children are aware of all the members of their group and of each other’s play preferences.
- A consistent schedule is in place which promotes children’s sense of security and supports a variety of learning experiences. Snack time provided some opportunities for children to engage in meaningful reciprocal conversations with practitioners.
- Strong connections have been established with parents. Interactions are responsive and supportive with informal communication of child-related information exchanged at both arrival and departure times.
- Much emphasis is placed by the setting on developing an integrated approach to supporting children’s smooth transition to the primary school.

Actions advised
- It is advised that the children’s current knowledge of their home cultures be broadened to develop their awareness of being members of a wider community. The display and availability of visual images, books and materials which reflect the diversity and uniqueness of their community is advised.
- Practitioners are advised to build on the present value placed on snack time as a social occasion to create an unhurried atmosphere that encourages children to relax, share their ideas, interests, feelings and talk about events of the day.

AREA 2

QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support children’s learning and development is good.
- A broad play-based curriculum is in place and is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. Curriculum planning is organised on a long-term, medium-term and short-term basis. There is scope to develop the planning from its current thematic basis to incorporate children’s emergent interests and abilities.
- Assessment of children’s learning is informed by Aistear and comprises of a variety of observation types, some of which are strengths-based.
- Practitioners ensure that play is central to how children learn and develop, with a number of types of play available during the daily routine.
• Children’s literacy and numeracy are promoted by practitioners, with examples of children demonstrating awareness of letters, combining letters to form words, measuring, counting and creating complex patterns in their play.

• Practitioners provide for gross motor play opportunities daily with a wide range of equipment available. Numerous opportunities for children to develop their physical skills and achieve success were observed. They including running, jumping, skipping and ball game activities requiring hand-eye coordination skills.

• The environment is bright, spacious and well-resourced with potential for further development.

**Actions advised**

• It is advised that daily curriculum planning be developed further. Plans could better reflect observations of the children’s emerging interests, their individual developmental progression, and the richness of their learning experiences to date.

• Practitioners are advised to provide a greater variety of play opportunities to include multi-sensory, socio-dramatic and creative activities in order to extend children’s hands-on experiences and learning.

**AREA 3**

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

• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.

• Children demonstrate enjoyment, engagement and persistence in their learning, often remaining at activities for extended periods during free play.

• Children work cooperatively in pairs and in small group work and they demonstrate empathy and concern for their peers.

• The materials available promote opportunities for children to experience a growing understanding of emergent mathematical language and concepts. Children engage in activities such as sorting, matching, classifying, making patterns and sequencing during free play.

• A limited quantity of open-ended and real materials was available to support and extend children’s play themes and learning during free play. Over-emphasis on the use of templates and lack of child-initiated art work was observed.

**Action advised**

• To provide for a greater range of play experiences, the provision of resources and opportunities in the indoor environment that elicit children’s innate curiosity, creativity, imagination and sense of wonder is advised.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership is very good.

• Informal two way channels of communication are fostered. Parents and practitioners interact in an unhurried, friendly, and open manner. The majority of children attending the pre-school are from the local area. There is a strong history of many families’ siblings attending since the service was established.

• Children understand the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and are consulted in the development of the behavioural expectations in the setting. The behaviour management policy has been recently updated.

• There are very effective links between school management and the practitioners. These support children’s transitions into and from the setting. It is reported that the children transition with ease into the infant class in the primary school.

• The practitioners and school principal work collaboratively and with great commitment and teamwork to support children’s learning and development.
Actions advised

- To build on the informal and positive communication fostered with parents, it is advised that strengths-based child observations be shared with parents on a regular basis.
- In light of a recent review of and changes made to the service’s behaviour management policy, it is advised that parents be informed of the changes and a copy of the new policy made available to them.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the practitioners to bring about the improvements outlined above is very good. The team engaged professionally in dialogue around the key findings and demonstrated considerable commitment to ensuring the ongoing development of the service.
### Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>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>Language</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Published June 2016*