An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection
Report

Little Seeds
Moyross Integrated Childcare Services
09LK0038

Moyross Community Enterprise Centre
Moyross
County Limerick

Date of Inspection: 24th October 2017
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Seeds Moyross Integrated Childcare Services is a community managed service. It is located in a large urban area on the outskirts of Limerick City. It provides full-day care, pre-school and afterschool sessions each day and was established in 1996. It provides two pre-school sessions in the morning. On the morning of the inspection, twenty eight children and seven practitioners (four full-time staff, a support person from the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), a Community Employment (CE) worker and a PSA from Enable Ireland) were 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 can 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 good.
- There is a warm, caring atmosphere in the setting. The practitioners know the children and their families very well and they are sensitive and responsive towards them.
- A key person approach is in place.
- The routine effectively promotes the children’s physical, social and emotional development. The majority of the children present as securely attached and confident.
- The children are successfully supported to be active agents in choosing and organising their own learning activities. They have ample time to play on their own, with peers and with the practitioners.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is promoted and supported effectively. Photographs are purposefully displayed over children’s coat hooks, on a birthday display, a friendship display, a family display and in their individual learning books and class journals.
- The setting has established very strong links with the local community and opportunities to bring the children, families and community together are prioritised and capitalised on successfully. The welcome area has a wide variety of photographs of community events and of children and families engaging in activities.
- The children independently manage their own hygiene and personal care needs in partnership with the practitioners.
- Snack time supports social engagement and healthy eating. The setting provides all the children with a nutritious breakfast each day.
- The practitioners provide the children with authentic and timely praise and they make effective use of their tone of voice and body language when praising and encouraging the children.
- The setting recognises and values diversity effectively.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to review the daily routine especially the snack-time, circle time and review time routine. The Use of the Rumpus Room and Baby Room should also be reviewed. Snack time should be a calm social occasion where the children are encouraged to participate to a greater extent.
- The practitioners are advised to consider how they can utilise the key person approach further to build positive relationships with families and children. Having smaller groupings with key children every day should also be considered. A useful range of practical tips and advice on using a key person approach is freely available in the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide within ‘Curriculum Foundations’.

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 good.
A broad-based curriculum is in place which is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.

There is a thematic approach to curriculum planning using long-term, medium-term and short-term planning sheets. The practitioners provide the children with a variety of multi-sensory, play-based, hands-on, creative learning experiences for exploring and investigating these pre-chosen themes.

The development of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum is at an early stage of development. However, a number of the practitioners demonstrate an awareness and understanding of being flexible within their planning. This will enable them to exploit spontaneous learning moments which emerge.

The majority of the practitioners are responsive to children's play interests and learning needs. They use a varied range of effective and timely interaction and teaching methodologies. These include asking appropriate open-ended questions to support children's thinking and talking. Listening attentively and following children's lead in play is also a feature of practice. Practitioners also initiate natural spontaneous conversations with the children and guide the children to be independent.

Play is central to children's learning and development within both rooms and play opportunities are freely available for the children. It was reported that the children sing songs, rhymes and listen to stories regularly, however, this was not observed during the inspection.

The indoor environments are spacious and purposefully developed into various interest areas. These provide the children with many opportunities to engage in a wide variety of types of play on their own, with peers and with the practitioners.

Children's learning is documented through photographs and assessments from the practitioners' observations. Each child has an individual learning folder with weekly observations conducted by their key person and each child has an individual art folder.

The children's emergent language and literacy skills are effectively supported through the environment, the resources, the activities and the practitioners' pedagogical approaches.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to utilise the resources from the ‘Planning and assessment’ pillar of practice in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* in order to review their planning and assessment practices. This will support the development of an emergent, enquiry-based curriculum. Seeking external support from the ABC co-ordinator or the County Childcare Committee will help in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to add notepads, pens, celebration cards, envelopes and whiteboards to encourage the children to engage in free mark-making and purposeful writing during their play.
- The practitioners are advised to capitalise on those natural opportunities that emerge during play to support the children in gaining an understanding of mathematical concepts by using mathematical language.
- The practitioners are advised to review the outdoor provision and the planning and preparation processes when using the outdoors. In this regard, smaller groupings, being prepared with appropriate outdoor clothing and spare clothing for both children and adults and having clear boundaries and clarity on the cleaning up routine is advised.

**AREA 3**

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

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children demonstrate high levels of motivation and engagement in their learning. They have opportunities to play alone, in groups with peers, and with attentive playful practitioners. They interact very well with their peers and are interested in exploring, negotiating roles, and taking turns with play materials.
- The children display very positive learning dispositions and attitudes to learning. They are resourceful, persistent, curious and creative.
- The children have lots of freedom to choose and initiate their own play agendas. They clearly enjoy working and exploring with sensory materials such as sand, water, mud and paint and they engage willingly in large motor play, construction and imaginative play.
• Many children are showing an interest in mark-making through schematic drawings and early writing.
• The children take some responsibility for looking after their personal belongings and care needs. However, there is scope for providing the children with much more opportunities to be independent and take responsibility for looking after the environment and their own personal care needs.
• The children are developing very appropriate positive pro-social skills. They present as kind and mannerly to each other and they are very respectful to the practitioners.
• The children display confidence in using their large motor skills, they jump, climb, run and roll and they listen and follow rules when playing hiding and chasing games.
• The children are aware of their local community and are developing and understanding of their identity as members of a unique family. On inspection a number of children shared stories and discussed their families using the photographs displayed in the rooms.

**Actions advised.**

• The children should be supported to see themselves as competent and capable learners, achieving and making progress in their learning. The practitioners are advised to note the voice of the children more within the documentation. This can be achieved simply by having conversations with children when looking at observation records, photographs, their art work and free drawings. Annotations which reflect the children’s thoughts and feelings should also be documented. These can be added to their journals and used purposefully to support the children to reflect on and discuss their learning experiences and achievements.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• The management team are very proactive in supporting all the staff to discuss and plan their programme of activities. They meet as a whole team regularly and they have ongoing one-on-one meetings with their line manager. These meetings are documented to ensure that agreed actions and changes to practice are followed up on to improve the learning experiences and outcomes for the children.
• The practitioners work very well together and there is a real sense of collegiality and mutual respect among them. Each practitioner has a leadership role in developing learning activities and experiences for the children.
• Communications between the setting and the children’s parents are very effective. There are many formal and informal opportunities for proactively engaging with parents and sharing children’s learning experiences and achievements with them.
• Ongoing professional development opportunities are prioritised and facilitated for all staff.
• There are very good procedures in place for enabling the children to settle into the setting. A very respectful hand-over process is in place and the enrolment form is designed to capture each child’s likes, dislikes, friends, siblings and their play interests.
• Many opportunities are capitalised on for bringing parents into the setting. These include one-one-one meetings, art and craft events where they are facilitated to engage in a joint art activity with their children, the incredible years programme, outings and many celebratory parties at Christmas and the end of the year.

**Action advised**

• Management is advised to support the staff in using the **Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.** This will further support practitioners in self-reviewing their practice and to include the opinions of parents and children when reviewing the work of the service.
• Management and the practitioners are advised to review the roles and responsibilities within the ECCE rooms to ensure that there is clarity around specific tasks and decisions within the programme of activities.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good.
### 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>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>Quality</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Excellent</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Very good</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Good</strong></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><strong>Fair</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Poor</strong></td>
<td>Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.</td>
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*Published September 2018*
APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report.

• Circle and recall and review were carried out in both pre-school rooms as they are an integral part of the pre-school routine but were missed on the morning of inspection as two rooms were being inspected.

• The children engaged in songs, stories and rhymes throughout the morning of the inspection and especially during recall time as language and literacy are valuable parts of a child’s overall learning, particularly during the early years.

• There is a large whiteboard in each preschool room with whiteboard markers available for the child’s disposal. Alongside this, there are different types of paper and crayons available at the child’s level at all times for mark making and creativity.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

• The Pre-school children now have their breakfast in their own room rather than the dining room to promote a sense of identity and belonging and responsibility within their own environment, as they are encouraged to clean up and help each other. Having breakfast time within their own room also encourages communication as it is a prime opportunity for the children to converse and develop language skills.

• As a recommendation from the report, the pre-school staff now have more defined roles in the areas of arts and crafts, set up of outdoor area, dinner set up and other related roles which rotate daily and are set out on their communication board.

• Our service are currently sourcing costing for one of the outdoor areas to be surfaces so the children can explore their outdoor area in all weathers as both of our preschool outdoor areas currently have grass in them. We are also sourcing outdoor clothing for the staff and children to go out in all weathers.

• To encourage more mark making there is now a able set up with two chairs in each room with a real life phone, a variety of materials for them to mark make on and tools (pencils and crayons) to do so and to also encourage role play.
• In both preschool rooms, we have also added more vocabulary to our walls such as little and large and big and small to encourage language development within our preschool.

• Following on from another recommendation from the report, the children now engage in their own picture/interpretation with use of blank pages to which the preschool staff sit with the children and discuss with them. The staff member then details the child’s description of the picture on to the drawing.

• Our baby room has been transformed into a meet and greet room for staff and parents so is no longer available for children’s use.

• A new climbing frame has been put into the rumpus room which is age appropriate for the preschool children so the preschool staff now bring up to four of their key worker children at any one time to explore this throughout the preschool week.

• After the inspection report, the pre-school staff have engaged in more activities and group time with their own key worker children as recommended.