Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Inspection Report

Name of Setting: Ardcroney Montessori
Identifier number: 09TN0045

Address of Setting: Ardcroney, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Date of visit: 10 May 2016

NOTE
This version of the inspection report supersedes and replaces a version of the report which was published, in error, on the Department’s website and was accessible there from 7 October 2016 to 7 November 2016. The Inspectorate apologises for the error in publication that occurred at that time.
Ardcroney Montessori is a privately run sessional service based in the hall of Ardcroney National School, Ardcroney, Co. Tipperary. The service offers the Early Childhood Care and Education [ECCE] programme. The key pedagogical approach used in the setting is the Montessori method of education. On the day of inspection fourteen children and two practitioners [a lead Montessori teacher and an assistant] were present in the setting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report; the owner/manager has stated that she does not accept this amended report as the final inspection report for her service.

**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.
- Practitioners create a very caring and warm atmosphere. The effective use of soft tones during practitioners’ interactions with the children is noteworthy.
- Encouragement and acknowledgement of children’s efforts and achievements by practitioners is evident.
- The daily routine creates a sense of predictability and security for children.
- There was some involvement of children in the transition activities during the session.
- Children are supported to independently manage their own hygiene and personal care needs.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured within an inclusive learning environment.

**Action(s) advised**
- To further develop practice, it is advised that consideration is given to reviewing the transition periods that leads to supporting children’s learning through active engagement.

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

- The quality of processes to support children’s learning and development is good.
- A curriculum, informed by the Montessori Method and the principles of *Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* is developed to support children’s learning and development.
- Practitioners plan activities to support children’s development across the key domains and to enable them to progress in their independent use of a range of Montessori equipment. Currently children’s emerging interests do not inform the planning processes.
- Practitioners are skilled in scaffolding children in their learning. They are successful in extending children’s thinking through engaging interactions during adult-initiated activities.
- The indoor and outdoor learning environments are shared with the adjoining National School. The indoor environment is set up daily by practitioners with a variety of meaningful play experiences to facilitate children’s purposeful learning.
- Children demonstrate an understanding of literacy and mathematic concepts through play experiences organised by practitioners.

**Action(s) advised**
- Building on the good planning practices to support learning, it is advised that children’s emerging interests are reflected within the planning process in order to support the development of an enquiry-based curriculum.
- Practitioners are advised to use a range of interaction strategies during free play that support children to talk about ideas related to their play without inhibiting their actions.

**AREA 3: QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS**

- The quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
- Children are developing a sense of competence and confidence as learners, along with demonstrating engagement and the motivation to persist. They experience opportunities to be genuinely successful and to be challenged and there is scope to encourage children to regularly reflect on their learning.
- The children are developing a capacity to understand the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.
- Through play experiences children are developing control over their fine and gross motor skills, and demonstrate their physical skills to manipulate objects and materials.
- Children are representing an understanding of their world and natural environment, as evidenced in the drawings, open-ended mark making and creating the 3-D ‘Insect Hotels’.
Children are to some extent expressing their feelings, thoughts, ideas and creativity through moving to music/song.

Action(s) advised
- It is advised that children have regular opportunities to reflect on their learning to support the development of their higher order thinking skills.
- To further encourage children to express themselves through movement to music and song, it is advised to allow children to initiate movements while practitioners imitate children’s actions.

AREA 4: QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The practitioners demonstrate the principles of professionalism, teamwork and collaboration. The lead practitioner provides a very good role model for staff, promoting high standards of quality learning and development experience for children.
- Practitioners have reflected on and adhere to the principles of Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education.
- Parents and practitioners interact informally to share information about children’s experiences on a daily basis. Practitioners exchange information with parents about the curriculum and its relationship to children’s development through regular newsletters.
- Practitioners have developed very good links with the local school and purposefully plan to support children’s transition from pre-school to primary school.

Action(s) advised
- To further develop review practices within the setting, it is advised to use the Self-Evaluation Tools contained in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE
The owner manager engaged very well in professional dialogue around the key findings of the inspection and demonstrates a very good capacity to implement the actions advised above.
## 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>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>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>Level</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>
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<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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