An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Harbour Hill Pre-school
12OY0086

Cushcallow, Banagher
Co Offaly

Date of inspection: 05 May 2016
CONTENT OF SETTING

Harbour Hill Preschool is a privately-run service located in Banagher, Co Offaly. The setting provides a sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education [ECCE] Programme. The setting has two staff; one owner manager/leader and one assistant. There were twelve children in attendance 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.
• Practitioners create a warm, welcoming and caring atmosphere for children and their families.
• Children are afforded choice in how they organise their learning. Practitioners facilitate children in planning their play choices and this leads to active engagement in purposeful play.
• The consistent daily routine creates a sense of security and control for children. Children would benefit from additional physical activity when transitioning between parts of the routine.
• It is commendable that the setting invites parents and families to spend time in the service on a weekly basis.
• Practitioners regularly use encouragement to acknowledge children’s efforts and accomplishments.

Action advised
• To build on good practice, practitioners are advised to engage children in whole-body movement activities when transitioning from circle time to lunch time.

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 very good.
• The service uses its comprehensive and documented curriculum, which reflects Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework, to guide learning and development practices.
• A thematic approach to planning takes account of children’s ideas and needs in order to develop their skills, knowledge and understanding. There is scope to reflect children’s emergent interests into the planning process to further progress children’s learning.
• Observational notes, detailed narrative observations, collections of children’s work and photos are used effectively to illustrate a rich picture of each child’s learning experiences.
• Practitioners foster authentic relationships with children. The commendable meaningful practitioner-child interactions are very responsive, and model appropriate language, including Irish phrases and mathematical language. Practitioners skilfully use open-ended questions which encourage children to describe their efforts, ideas and reflect on previous learning.
• The well-organised indoor and outdoor learning environments are divided into defined interest areas that allow for many different types of play.

Actions advised
• It is advised that consideration be given to increasing the use of information from observations on children’s interests to inform planning for children’s learning.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• The quality of the children’s learning experience and achievements is very good.
• Children demonstrate high levels of engagement and enjoyment in their learning activities. They experience success and are developing a positive understanding of their own identity as competent learners.
• The children confidently and expressively communicate their thoughts and ideas. The ‘Feelings Wheel’ encourages children to understand and express their feelings.
• Children actively explore and manipulate materials in the environment, using their fine and gross motor skills. This builds on children’s natural curiosity and inquisitive nature.
• Many positive examples of children’s capacity to turn take and co-operate with others are evident.

Actions advised
• Children’s learning could be further enhanced by including visual representation of children’s families to support the development of a positive sense of identity and belonging.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• An ethos of professionalism, teamwork, collaboration and partnership with parents is evident.
• Through the regular informal staff meetings, practitioners ensure the smooth organisation of educational experiences and activities in the setting.
• The team are committed to improving the learning experiences and outcomes for children and would benefit from developing a systematic approach to reviewing practices.
• Observations are shared regularly with parents and, at the end of the year, children’s folders and photo albums highlighting achievements and experiences are given to parents.
• Many examples of effective communication with parents are evident. These include sharing the plan of learning activities for the week and appropriate use of text messaging and social media.
• Links have been established with the local school and purposeful activities developed to support children’s transitions from pre-school to primary school.

Action advised
• Building on the staff commitment to improvement, it is advised that the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide be used to support critical reflection and to identify priorities for development which can lead to positive change.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE
The owner/manager and the other practitioner engaged very well in professional dialogue around the key findings of the inspections and they demonstrate 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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</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>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>
</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

The manager and staff of Harbour Hill Pre-school are very satisfied with the findings of the report. The findings discussed with us on the day of the report were represented in the report. There were no surprises in the report and no changes required. We were graded Very Good in the four areas of the report which means that we are highly effective in meeting the needs of the children. We are very happy with this result and the contents of the report.

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

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