An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection
REPORT

Beaumont Pre-school Community Playgroup
09DY0240

St Fiachra’s School, Montrose Park
Beaumont, Dublin 5

Date of inspection: 15 April 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Beaumont Pre-school Community Playgroup, established in 1993, is situated on the campus of St Fiachra's Primary Schools. The service provides four pre-school sessions daily; two in the morning and two in the afternoon, with a mix of programme-funded and fee-paying places. The inspection visit was conducted during a morning session. Eleven children, all of whom were participating in the ECCE Programme, were present. Management of the service changed recently and the service is now co-managed by two longstanding staff members. 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 in the service is very warm and practitioner-child relationships are characterised by affection. Practitioners display sensitivity and care in their interactions with the children throughout the session.
- Child-child relationships are very positive. Children displayed enjoyment in their engagement with each other and they were often observed to support and care for each other unprompted.
- Well-established routines, a key person system, and clear transitions support the children’s social and emotional well-being in the setting and promote their learning and development.
- The strong sense of community and belonging in the service is noteworthy and could be further enhanced through activities to explore identity and belonging through the year.

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.
- Provision for children’s learning and development is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and some elements of the High/Scope curriculum are utilised. Curriculum activities are planned and recorded formally each week and often incorporate children’s current interests.
- Practitioners display a strong commitment to play and children were engaged in playful activity throughout the session.
- Some fundamental types of play such as water, open-ended art and socio-dramatic play, were not observed. Further development of the learning environment and resources and an increased practitioner focus on facilitating children’s play would effectively support, consolidate and extend their learning.
- Practitioners use conversation and song through the day to support children’s language development.

Actions advised
- It is advised that children’s engagement in a broader range of types of play be supported through increased provision and accessibility of resources and practitioners’ engagement in and facilitation of play.
- Increasing the variety and range of resources available and accessible throughout the room, including natural, real and open-ended materials and tools, to enrich the children’s play and learning opportunities is advised. There is potential for practitioners to make more use of picture and story books, rhymes and word play to further enhance children’s language and literacy development.
- It is advised that practitioners ensure that outdoor play is a daily event for all children by having a set time for outdoor play in the routine and by sourcing appropriate clothing to protect against all weather.
AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
• Almost all children were observed to be enthusiastically engaged and motivated throughout the session. Children made effective use of the materials and resources that were available to them.
• Possibilities for improvement exist, such as the introduction of materials to support early mathematics and science in the sand and water area, provision of real materials in the home area to promote socio-dramatic play, and freely accessible open-ended art materials to support creativity and self-expression.
• The children’s demonstrated desire and developing capacities to interact with adults and other children to share their opinions, ideas, thoughts and feelings were observed.

Actions advised
• Language, literacy and mathematical learning opportunities can be added throughout the day through the introduction of developmentally appropriate materials, activities and interactions.
• It is advised that practitioners begin to plan for and facilitate opportunities for children to develop more complex social interactions such as turn-taking, co-operation, negotiating and building relationships through the daily use of key groups and formal and informal small-group activities and conversations times.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

• The quality of the management and leadership for learning is very good.
• While there have been recent management changes, the core staff team has worked in this setting for many years and demonstrates a highly commendable level of commitment to the service and to the children and families it serves.
• There is clarity around roles and responsibilities and the team is beginning to formalise and record their meetings, planning and reviews.
• Current plans for the development of management and leadership for learning include: open days for families and the wider community, establishing more formalised links with local schools, developing a parent handbook, writing a regular piece for the parish bulletin, and signage to promote the service in the community.

Action advised
• The practitioners are encouraged to continue with the implementation of their development plans and to sustain their engagement in regular review practices which monitor the impact of their improvement initiatives on children’s learning.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The team engaged professionally and reciprocally in the feedback discussion and demonstrate a very good capacity to implement the actions advised to ensure the continuing improvement of quality in the service.
## 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>Quality Level</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 early-years education-focused inspection report recognised and affirmed the high quality educational experiences we provide to children through play in our early-years setting. We will be sharing the full report with the parents and families of our current children, and as part of our induction for the new children/families starting in September.

To support continuing improvements in our early-years education provision, the inspection report outlined relevant actions for practitioners to reflect upon. Having taken account of the advised actions, Beaumont Community Pre-school has further progressed in respect of our high quality curriculum activities that we provide to support children’s learning experiences and development in our early-years setting.

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

To support continuing improvements in Beaumont Community Pre-school we have implemented a number of actions advised in the early-years education-focused inspection report, and are in the planning process of the implementation of the remaining number of those actions.

To date Beaumont Community Pre-school has done the following:

- We have increased provision and accessibility of resources by adding more real, natural and open-ended materials to a number of our interest areas to support and extend children’s play and learning opportunities. Materials added include empty food boxes that the children and staff brought in from home and a junk art box.

- The outdoor play area is now incorporated into our daily routine, thus providing opportunities to support children’s fine and gross motor skills, balance, co-ordination, language, literacy and holistic development.

- Supporting language, literacy and mathematical learning opportunities among children is at the core of Beaumont Community Pre-school curriculum. To date we have added materials such as playdough mats, and have put a greater emphasis on teaching language and literacy in a fun way through hands-on activities, worksheets, rhymes, songs, games and projects. Music remains a key part of our daily curriculum.

- To support children’s learning, we are now providing children with opportunities to measure out ingredients for playdough and other cooking activities that are introduced throughout the pre-school year. The feedback from the children has been very positive.

- Story-telling sessions to enrich literacy and numeracy experiences in early childhood are provided regularly and we are putting the children’s top 10 list together. Worksheets linked to stories, e.g., Brown Bear and the Hungry Caterpillar, have been developed.

- We have devised a learning story to develop more complex social interactions, and to support turn-taking, co-operation, negotiating, building relationships, and to further develop children’s problem-
solving skills. We engage regularly in circle time to support children’s social, listening, negotiating and turn-taking skills.

Current plans from the advised actions include:
• Reminding parents to provide appropriate clothing to support safe outdoor play, e.g., sun cream, hats, rainwear, etc.
• Ongoing regular reviews to monitor the impact of our improvement initiatives on children’s learning and development.