Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Hopes and Dreams Playschool
09 RN 0035
Ballyforan
County Roscommon

Date of inspection: 19 April 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Hopes and Dreams Playschool is a community-based, sessional service located in Ballyforan, Co. Roscommon. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The service has three staff including one leader and two assistants. On the day of the inspection, seventeen children were present. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings of this report; the setting chose to accept the report without 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.
- The staff team are warm, welcoming and display a caring approach to all children and their families.
- Children are supported to manage their own hygiene and care needs independently.
- The children’s sense of identity and belonging is nurtured in a variety of ways with some opportunity to further develop the use of visual representation in the routines and environment.
- The setting is well integrated into the local community and this is evident through the many activities and events that take place during the year which bring children, families and practitioners together.

Action advised
- To build on good practices that support the development of children’s identity and sense of belonging, it is advised that the service include children’s photographs alongside their name on the visual register and on their accessible baskets.

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 very good.
- The curriculum is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the HighScope approach. Detailed short term plans which focus on children’s emerging interests are used purposefully by practitioners in their provision for children’s learning. These plans are monitored on a weekly basis through staff team meetings.
- Practitioners ensure that play is central to the children’s learning and development with ample time provided for children to engage in child-initiated free play.
- The flexible routine includes play-based adult-initiated small and large group time activities. A review of the learning intentions for these activities in order to ensure a closer alignment with the HighScope developmental indicators and learning goals of Aistear would support optimum progression in children’s learning.
- A stimulating, accessible indoor environment has been developed which is divided into well-defined interest areas and is equipped with a very good range of open-ended, sensory rich materials. The kitchen area which provides space and materials for socio dramatic play is highly commendable.
- The outdoor learning environment offers opportunities for children to develop their gross motor skills and children can bring materials from indoors to support emergent ideas outside.

Action advised
- It is advised that the staff team review and discuss the learning intentions for adult initiated activities planned in the long and medium term plans, linking them to the learning goals in Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and the HighScope key developmental indicators.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievement is very good.
- Children demonstrated high levels of engagement, perseverance and enjoyment in their learning activities on the day of the inspection.
Many positive examples of children displaying the ability to negotiate and resolve conflicts using age-appropriate language and strategies are evident. Practitioners participate in play with children and could build on this good practice to extend the learning possibilities for children. The innovative use of puppets encourages children to communicate their feelings and understand the views of others.

**Action advised**
- The use of open-ended questioning during adult-child interactions is advised to extend the children’s language, ideas and clarify their thinking.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The leader and staff have a strong sense of teamwork and a shared commitment to providing high quality provision. The continuity of the personnel over a long period of time has contributed significantly to this. Regular informal and formal staff meetings ensure the smooth organisation of the educational experiences and activities in the setting.
- A supportive, motivated and respectful management style ensures a very good level of collaboration among staff.
- Parents and family members have many opportunities to participate in events and activities within the setting.
- Strong links are established within the community and in particular with the primary school. The service is currently developing a project to support children’s transitions to primary school from pre-school.

**Action advised**
- To build on the very good self-review practices and to support the innovative new ‘Transitions to School’ project, the staff is advised to collaboratively use the *Aistear Siolta Practice Guide* and in particular the pillar related to transitions.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The leader and staff demonstrate a very good capacity to ensure the ongoing improvement in the quality of provision for children’s learning and development.
## 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>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>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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