

Meeting Script

Good afternoon, everyone and thank you for attending today's staff meeting. This meeting will be focused on our upcoming inspection from CIW to our Flying start setting. We currently have 12 children in our care, and the focus will be on ensuring our current practices are clearly evidenced, consistently applied and align with expectation from CIW. This will be our chance to discuss further into any details that need discussion or any added support that will be needed for the inspection to show how we are providing high-quality care in our setting as I know parental engagement has taken a decline in more recent times, but we can discuss this further. So, let's make a start.

As the practitioner responsible for tracking the children's progress within our flying start (Wales) setting, I will give an overview of how we evidence children's development and ensure that our practice meets the expectations of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in readiness for our inspection. I will also reflect on our approaches and if they coincide with the Quality-of-Care Report to help identify any areas that need extra support.

To ensure that high-quality early year's provision is available and accessible to the children in our care it is vital that we track children's progress. Within flying start, assessments carried out are to support early intervention for more positive outcomes for young children (Welsh Government, 2017) Furthermore, the Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings states that assessment is and should be a continuous and ongoing process that encourages and supports progression rather than seeing a skill developed and not developing further (Welsh Government, 2022a) Assessments also help practitioners to understand that observation is key to understanding a child's progress over time (Welsh Government, 2022b)

One of our strengths within our setting is our use of 'love letters' to the parents. These provide positive accounts of what their child has achieved and experiences, while also identifying areas of need to target for future development. This approach shows how important a strong relationship between parents and staff is, which is highlighted as being a key aspect of effective early years practice (Welsh Government, 2019). It is also important that maintaining clear communication within families aligns with the criteria stated by CIW, emphasising that when encouraging children's wellbeing by having parents involved in their development (CIW,2019).

However, as practitioners we know that critical reflection always plays a part in good practice. While love letters celebrate children's achievements, practitioners must ensure and deliver adequate time for the identified targets to be consistently followed up with in our planning. Without this there is risk that assessments will become more focused on what they have done rather than how we can help children grow further (Siraj-Blatchford, 2009).

Another method we have used to track progress is through progression records, which includes photos and comments made by practitioners. These provide visual and written evidence of children's development and are used to identify the next steps.

Observation-based assessments are seen as the best for practice as this type of observation can capture learning in the moment more naturally (Early Years Wales, 2020). This is in accordance with the Welsh Government (2022) expectations, which sees observation as a main method of assessment in a non-maintained nursery setting.

From a Critical perspective Photographs are considered evidence but must be followed by meaningful comment, without a clear understanding of the learning to document, this may lack enough evidence to show progression over time (Roberts and Bolton, 2019). Therefore, practitioners' comments must link specifically to the child's development and their next steps.

The setting is using an in the moment planning approach, which allows practitioners to respond to the children's interests to extend their learning. This reflects the principles of child-centred learning within the Curriculum for Wales Framework, which emphasizes the importance of meaningful experiences and responsive teaching from adults around them (Welsh Government, 2021). Research has suggested that High-quality interactions between children and practitioners play one of the most significant roles in early years learning outcomes (Pascal and Bertram, 2012).

However, ensuring that an in the moment planning is consistently recorded can be a challenge. While having in the moment interactions can show true reflections of a child, practitioners must make effort to capture and document evidence of progression, especially with in mind of inspection needing this evidence available.

We should also consider how flying start provision compares with non-funded settings, while non-funded settings will have a more flexible approach, flying start settings are required to follow and meet specific standards relating to assessment, quality assurance and early interventions (Welsh Government, 2017). AS a setting we must also meet the national minimum standards of childcare, which sets expectations for quality, safety and consistency of care (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2023). This also sets the tone for consistent documentation to demonstrate clearly the progress the children in our care display.

At this stage it is important that we consider the Self-assessment of Service Statement (SASS), which demonstrates how our setting meets the National Minimum Standards to support improvements in continuous provision. SASS will allow us as practitioners to critically evaluate the practice we deliver and help identify our strengths but also the areas we need to develop to provide clear evidence for inspection (CIW, 2023). We must ensure that we regularly review and update our documents so that provision allows flows with the same principles that CIW expect to see practitioners carrying out and to see that we are committed to reflective practice to ensure high-quality care.

One of our strong tools that we use in our setting is a personalized book for each child, which will include different variations of evidence gathered by practitioners such as observation, photographs and reflections collected over their time with us. Each child is selected as a focus child during the week, allowing practitioners to be able to have more detailed observations and quality interactions. These books also include information

contributed by families, which give us details about the children and their experiences at home and a more holistic understanding of their development. Having to work on and improve a good parental involvement is key to ensuring support is providing the best care to the children's learning and wellbeing (Welsh Government, 2019).

To be critical, while personalised books are extremely valuable to our practice, consistency is essential in how they are being used. All practitioners must contribute on a regular basis, allowing time for purposeful observations that will be focused on developing their skills further. Being too focused on evidence and documentation can reduce the time you can have during your interaction and lose the meaningful aspect, which is key to learning (OECD, 2017).

In preparation for the inspection, we should consider the expectations of us within the Quality-of-Care Report by Care Inspectorate Wales. The requirement to reflect on key questions, such as how effectively we support the children's development, how we show progress and how we involve parental engagement in their learning journey (CIW, 2019)

Our current systems provide strong evidence in relation to these questions. For example:

- Love letters and personalised books demonstrate effective parent partnerships
- Progression records show how children develop over time
- In-the-moment planning highlights responsive and high-quality interactions

However, there are also areas for development. We must ensure that:

- observations clearly demonstrate progression over time rather than isolated moments
- targets are consistently revisited and evaluated

- documentation is used to inform planning
- reflective practice is embedded across the team

The Estyn Inspection Framework (2018) also highlights the importance of assessment to inform planning and support progression. Inspectors will be looking for clear evidence that practitioners understand is to develop children's knowledge to further extend their skills and knowledge through experiences.

In conclusion, tracking progress within our setting involves a range of different approaches, including letters, progression records, in the moment planning and personalised learning books. These methods allow practitioners in our setting to build a guide and evidence to understand each child's development. However, it is essential that we continue to critically reflect on our practice. Assessments must continue with purpose, meaning and focus on supporting child development rather than documentation pressure. This can be done by ensuring observation is used to plan future tasks and activities to help push children within their targets that can show consistency. Also providing high-quality practice that meets the expectations of Care Inspectorate Wales and overall supporting the children in our care to ensure they thrive.

Thank you for listening, and I welcome any questions or reflections from the outcomes.

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