

Leadership and Management for systems of quality

No AI has been used in this assignment.

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1. Script

Hi everyone, I'm Lucy and this morning I will be focusing on how we currently meet the care and development needs of our children using the 'Curriculum for Funded Non-Maintained Nursery Settings' framework (Welsh Government, 2024). In this discussion, I will explore how our current practice supports development, how we know that what we do is effective, and what improvements could be made to further support children's development. The non-maintained curriculum focuses on developing children's knowledge and skills through a play-based learning approach, which supports children's holistic development and helps them to become confident and capable learners (Early Years Wales, no date). Since we started using the non-maintained curriculum, we have put a big focus on creating effective environments and making sure that our spaces are set up to properly support children's learning and development.

For an effective environment to be successful, it should support and challenge children's learning both indoors and outdoors, and encourage exploration, risk-taking, independence and creativity. It should provide lots of play opportunities through organised areas with open-ended resources that support confidence and resilience, whilst sparking curiosity and helping children develop skills such as communication and early mathematical understanding. There should also be quiet spaces within the setting to support children in relaxing, being calm and self-regulating (Welsh Government, 2024).

In our Flying Start setting, I feel we have worked hard to create different areas for our children to support their development, such as the role play, creative and construction area, which allow our children to explore different types of play. We also have open-ended resources that children can access independently and use however they choose, which encourages them to make their own choices and builds confidence. Our outdoor area is continuously open, which allows our children to explore where they wish, and it supports the development of physical and gross motor skills through activities such as climbing, running and building using our loose parts. We also have a 'Zen Zone' and a reading area, with books and calming resources, which allow children to rest and regulate their emotions if needed, or to just have quiet time. In relation to the care and development and environment

sections of the SASS form, I would rate our setting as good, as we provide children with opportunities and environments that support their development in a way that is engaging, safe and suits their needs. This also aligns with Standard 7 of the National Minimum Standards for childcare, which focuses on ‘opportunities for play and learning’ (Welsh Government, 2023).

In our setting, we use a range of methods to gather information about how effective our environment is in supporting children’s development. One of the main ways we do this is through observations, for example, we see children confidently accessing resources on their own and being highly engaged in their play, which shows independence and confidence. We also use the observation, assessment and planning formative assessment cycle (Birth to 5 Matters, no date) to understand how children are developing, to plan next steps, and to identify what is and is not working within our practice. Through this, we can see children building skills such as communication, problem-solving and social interaction. We also get our children’s views on the environment, by asking them what they enjoy doing, what their favourite areas are, and what they would like to add or change in the setting, as well as looking at areas they no longer use. This helps us understand how they are using the environment and how they are learning. This aligns with the non-maintained curriculum (Welsh Government, 2024), which values children’s voices, and encourages changing and adapting areas to suit the growing needs of children. We also speak to parents and carers regularly at drop off and pick up times, which gives both them and us a chance to ask questions about how their children are getting on and if they have any concerns. Majority of parents tell us their children are eager to attend the setting and feel they are progressing well.

To improve our practice and keep standards high, it is important we think about what we as staff can do better. Even though the environment plays a key role in supporting children’s development, it does not always lead to good learning on its own. The non-maintained curriculum (Welsh Government, 2024) highlights the importance of enabling adults, meaning that practitioners support children’s learning through interacting, modelling behaviour and using teachable moments during play. This is an area we could improve within our setting, as it will help us better support children’s learning. To support us in being enabling adults, we as practitioners need to put a stronger focus on our interactions with children, extending their thinking and

modelling language during play. Kelly, as our leader, I feel it would be beneficial to provide us all with the training to support this, as well as possibly allowing us to take part in weekly reflective practice, where we can discuss what is or what is not working within our setting. This will help to ensure continuous improvement in our practice, and consistency across the setting.

Both effective environments and enabling adults show how our setting supports the care and development and environment sections of the SASS evaluation form. This means we can use this as evidence when completing the SASS form in preparation for our inspection with Care Inspectorate Wales, which needs to be completed before inspection to show how we provide quality care for children (Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, 2017).

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