Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Little Einsteins
09GY0143

Corrandrum National School
Corrandrum, Claregalway
Co Galway

Date of inspection: 03 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Little Einsteins is a privately-owned service located in Corrandrum, Claregalway, Co Galway. The setting opened in 2013 and is based in a designated room in Corrandrum National School. The pedagogical approach is play-based using *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*. There were 13 children and 2 practitioners present on day of evaluation. The setting was given the opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report; the setting chose to accept the report without a response.

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 good.
- The atmosphere is warm and inviting. The practitioners work well to ensure the children and parents feel welcomed and valued in the setting. The children are given the respect and time to settle into the activities in the morning.
- There are positive partnerships with parents and the community. This is evident in the visits and interactions with members of the community and the nurturing and supportive relationships with parents.
- The transitions between activities are used as an opportunity for children to work together and take responsibility. For children who may need additional support and guidance with positive behaviour, the practitioners need to adapt their strategy to focus more on developing the children’s interests and strengths.
- The playful conversations with the children during circle-time create meaningful connections with home and the community.

Actions advised
- The practitioners are advised to develop the children’s journals and displays in the environment to support children’s sense of identity and belonging in the setting and wider context.
- It is advised that a strengths-based approach be adopted, where practitioners build on and extend the interests of the children who need additional support and guidance with positive behaviour.

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 fair.
- The curriculum planning is organised on long-term, medium-term and short-term bases and the observations of children’s learning are linked to the four themes of *Aistear*.
- The rich storytelling observed gave children the opportunity to engage in conversation and respond to the practitioner’s questions. Further development of this approach and greater use of open-ended questioning when children are playing with materials and their peers will assist practitioners in finding out more about the children’s emerging interests and thinking.
- The children are given adequate time to play in the morning. Further consideration can be given to extending the opportunities for children to revisit and develop their play ideas and interests.
- On the day of the inspection, it was evident that a formal and rote-learning oriented approach is used to teach children about letter recognition, shape and number.
- The children are interested in exploring their mark-making and some children are showing awareness about how they can use writing more. There is currently a limited range of real and multi-sensory resources accessible to the children to support their interest and development in this area.
Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to extend the opportunities for children to develop early literacy and mathematical skills through real-life experiences and across their playroom activities.
- The practitioners are advised to use open-ended questioning with the children when they are playing with materials and their peers, to find out more about their emerging interests and thinking.
- It is advised that all children have independent access to a variety of real and multi-sensory resources to support their mark-making and emerging interests.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievement is fair.
- The children are enthusiastic to learn and they respond well when they are actively involved and are playing out their ideas and interests. Further consideration can now be given to providing a more developmentally appropriate, play-based and child-led approach to teaching and learning.
- Children are developing the ability to play cooperatively, in pairs and in small groups and they help each other in their activities and in carrying out tasks.
- Children enjoy and engage in episodes of sustained play in the outdoor and indoor environments. A limited range of opportunities was provided for children to recall and reflect on their learning with each other.
- The setting recognises the importance of fostering children’s imaginative ideas through creative storytelling. Practitioners can now use the children’s interests and conversations to help plan and develop their sense of wonder and creativity.

Actions advised

- It is advised that activities are planned to ensure the children experience success and fulfilment in their learning, taking into consideration the children’s interests, abilities and stage of development.
- Increased opportunities in the daily routine for children to recall and reflect on their learning experiences and achievements with each other are advised.
- It is advised that practitioners use the children’s interests and conversations to extend learning and to develop their sense of wonder and creativity.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The written vision for the setting values the importance of how children learn through play. This could be better translated into the programme of activities in the setting.
- The manager and practitioner are committed to improving their practice and this is evident in their engagement and attendance at local in-service training events on the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide.
- The practitioners are commended for their efforts to collaborate and share ideas for practice with the other services in the locality.
- The teacher from the local primary school visits the pre-school to support the transitions for children. An information booklet that is completed by the parent and practitioner is another practical and effective strategy used to support the transition for children moving to primary school.
- The practitioners know the children well and they have developed respectful relationships with the parents, this is reflected in their settling-in procedures.

Actions advised

- To support the implementation of the setting’s philosophy of play-based learning, formal staff meetings should allow for discussion to be more focused on reviewing how children are learning through play and the role of the practitioner in this process.
• Practitioners are advised to use the children’s journals to share with parents their child’s learning and achievements through play.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The manager and practitioner demonstrate a good capacity to implement the actions advised above. This is exemplified in their ongoing commitment to providing quality learning experiences for all children attending the setting.
## 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>Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of processes to support children’s learning and development</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements</td>
<td>Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>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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