Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Kiddies Corner Pre-school
09LK0034

Community Hall
Main Street Pallaskenry
County Limerick

Date of Inspection: 11th September 2017
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Kiddies Corner Pre-school is a privately managed pre-school. It is located in the community hall of Palaskenry and has been in operation for thirty years. The pre-school has daily access to the large community hall. It provides a morning and afternoon Early Childhood Care and Educations (ECCE) Programme. On the morning of the inspection, eleven children and two practitioners were present, one of whom is the owner/manager. At the time of the inspection, the majority of the children were starting the second week of the second year of their participation in the ECCE Programme. 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 can 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 the children’s learning and development is very good.
- There is a caring and open atmosphere exists in the service. The families and children are warmly welcomed and special attention is given to children who find it hard to say goodbye to their parents.
- The practitioners are very friendly and take time to settle the children on arrival. They know the children and families very well and they converse with the parents and listen to stories about the children’s experiences outside of the service.
- High-quality, responsive interactions between the practitioners and the children support the children’s emotional security and their learning in a very positive way.
- Transitions within the daily routine are well managed for the most part and the children appear to be familiar with the daily routine. The practitioners use timers, verbal prompts and a transition song.
- The children are supported effectively to manage their own hygiene and personal care needs and snack-time is a lovely social occasion for the children.
- Opportunities to support the children to develop an appreciation of themselves as individuals and as members of the group are provided. On the morning of the inspection, the practitioners had one-to-one time with the children to create individual ‘all about me’ posters. These included photographs of the children and their families and narratives capturing their voice on matters important to them.
- The photographs of various family groupings in the service indicate how diversity is recognised, valued and affirmed in the pre-school.
- Children’s efforts, achievements and acts of kindness are encouraged and praised regularly by the practitioners.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to use further visual prompts such as a pictorial daily schedule with photographs to support the children’s transitions and their play choices. This will be particularly supportive for children new to the service and it will be a helpful reminder to the children in their second year.
- A review of the ‘Jobs chart’ is advised to eliminate the long waiting times and to support the children to be able to predict for themselves what their job is. Discussion of jobs in smaller groupings and a pictorial schedule of the jobs will also be of assistance in this regard.

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 good.
• A broad curriculum incorporating a play-based approach is documented and monthly and weekly plans are drawn up to direct the programme of activities. While the practitioners are knowledgeable about the Aistear themes, the monthly and weekly planning currently undertaken is not sufficiently linked to children’s varying interests, strengths, needs or previous learning experiences or to the learning goals provided in Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
• The available photographic scrapbook from the previous year shows the types of experiences provided for children in the service to support their learning and development. They illustrate small-group games, storytelling, the children’s creation of their own books, tasting of different fruits, planting flowers, fruit and vegetables, play activities in the playground, social gatherings such as picnics and family events, enquiry-based nature walks, and water and sand play.
• The creation of individual portfolios has commenced. These contain photographs of the children, their families, their community, their play activities, and samples of their mark making and other work. The portfolios are available to the children in the pre-school room and parents are facilitated to view them throughout the year.
• Approaches to assessment are underdeveloped. The children’s portfolios are the main source of information about the children’s learning and development. Developmental checklists are completed periodically. The practitioners do not conduct systematic formal observations or assessments of the children’s learning.
• Play is the central medium through which the children learn and develop in this service. The indoor environment supports most types of play and learning. The service avails of a local playground regularly as it does not have a defined safe outdoor space. The playground is well resourced and effectively supports fundamental movement skills and social skills. The service uses the large hall successfully to support the children’s gross motor skills and spatial awareness.
• A variety of appropriate mark-making resources are available and used purposefully to support children’s creativity and emergent literacy skills.
• Very good attention is paid to the children’s language development through the use of rhymes, story, discussion and singing. The practitioners’ use of open-ended questions and reflective listening during story-time commendably supports the children’s engagement with stories, introduces them to new vocabulary and extends their thinking and reasoning skills.
• Early numeracy, such as counting, sorting and classifying activities, is promoted in a fun way.
• The service has purposefully created links with external agencies to optimise support for children with additional needs and is currently participating in the Leadership for Inclusion Programme (LINC).

Actions advised
• Planning needs to take greater account of the two year cycle, the child’s voice (gathered through observations and conversations with them) and the current and emergent interests of the children.
• The practitioners are advised to utilise the resources in the ‘Planning and assessing’ pillar of the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide. These will support them in understanding and developing an emergent curriculum and assessment approaches that identify and support children’s learning dispositions, skills, knowledge and understanding and continuity in their learning.
• The practitioners are advised to review the book area, especially the variety of books and the presentation of the books.
• The practitioners are advised to consider the possibility of having the door open between the room and the hall during the session to allow the children greater access to the sand, the dress-up area and the chill-out area.
• The practitioners are advised to add more natural and ‘found’ items to the indoor environment.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
• The children demonstrate enjoyment, engagement and interest in their learning. They confidently initiate their play agendas which include imaginative play themes, small-world play, and mark-making and block play. They have opportunities to play alone or with their peers and they appropriately negotiate roles and turn-taking with the play materials. There is a need for more sensory materials to be available to the children in the indoor environment.
The children are developing a positive sense of identity and belonging through the use of photographs, self-portraits, birthday charts, a journal of group activities and individual books.

The children demonstrate an awareness of print. Many identified their name on the fridge when choosing their job for the week and they are effectively supported in recognising symbols.

The children really enjoy listening to stories. Story-time on the morning of the inspection was a lovely intimate relaxed occasion with the children eagerly sharing their thoughts, feelings and previous knowledge about firefighters.

Time in the large hall provides opportunity for the children to move physically. It also enable them to engage in active games initiated by the practitioners and to challenge themselves with resources for large body movement such as stilts, balance beams and hoops.

The majority of the children are showing an interest in mark-making and early writing. The practitioners successfully model writing by writing down the children’s thoughts. The children make good use of the materials provided to support pre-writing skills. They enjoy making jigsaws, building with blocks and creating peg pictures.

The children demonstrate a keen interest in taking responsibility for their own personal care and hygiene needs and in looking after the environment. They put on their own coats, place their tissues and rubbish in the bin and take pride in their individual roles during tidy-up time.

Many of the children understand the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour and demonstrate self-regulation. However, a number of children require many verbal reminders and cautions about their behaviour.

**Actions advised**

- The practitioners are advised to use pictorial behaviour prompts to support the children’s understanding of the behaviours that are expected of them. Practitioners are also advised to take the opportunity at small-group time to affirm observed positive pro-social behaviours.
- The practitioners are advised to add more story props and opportunities for the children to tell their own stories or to retell familiar stories. Story sacks, felt story boards and puppets will help in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to add a large water tray, playdough and other sensory and exploratory materials to the indoor environment.
- Increased opportunities for turn-taking activities would extend the children’s problem-solving and social skills further.

**AREA 4**

**QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING**

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The lead practitioner has established very good systems to ensure efficiency in the day-to-day running of the service. She is very proactive and committed to meeting the needs of all the children.
- The practitioners work very well together; they share the same vision and a strong sense of teamwork is evident. They meet regularly to discuss planning. External supports have been used in the past to support practice in the pre-school.
- The majority of the communication with parents and families is informal. In addition, formal opportunities such as a parent handbook, regular newsletters, a private social media page and emails are utilised effectively for sharing the curriculum and children’s learning with parents.
- The manager assists and supports families in being aware of the service and the programme of activities through open days and a parent handbook. Families are invited to a sports day, a teddy bears picnic and a Christmas and graduation concert.
- Very effective systems are in place to support the children in settling into the service at the start of the pre-school year. An enrolment form gathers comprehensive information from the parents about the children’s play interests, what they need if they get upset, the names of their siblings, friends and pets. To support and reassure parents on the first day of pre-school, scones and tea are provided in the hall for all families after they have settled the children in the playroom.
- Because this is small rural community, close links exist with the local primary school; this supports continuity in education provision for the children.

**Action advised**
To further develop and support quality in management and leadership for learning, it is advised that the practitioners reflect on their practice regularly and include the voice of the child and the parents in this review process. The self-assessment templates in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* will help in this regard.

The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to support planning, the documentation of the self-review process and its outcomes, and the sharing of information with parents about their children’s achievements and their learning progress.

**CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE**

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good.
## 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>
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## Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</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

Area 1  Observations on the content of the inspection report.

In responds to my Early Years Inspection report I feel that you must take into consideration that my inspection took place on the 11th of September and that we had only one week of preschool done. Therefore we are only settling in the children after they have been at home for eight weeks. It was commented that we did not have evidence of their pervious learning- this is impossible as their work has gone home in June in their scrapbooks and their folders which was evidence of their pervious learning- this second year preschool is only in its infancy therefore we are still a work in progress.

Area 2  Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.

This year’s preschool which had one week done - therefore we were beginning in conjunction with the children and other leaders to plan and asset our future learning goals for each child’s interests and abilities while taking into consideration their background and concerns. Our long term planner was on the press door for parents to look at. Our medium planner is always work in progress as children interests, worries and concerns’ are continuously changing therefore we must be always willing to change and adapt to suit all up-coming events.

We were advised to add stories, props, playdough, water, natural and other sensory material to the environment but had my inspection being later in the year the inspector would see that we do continuously included all the above through varies times of the preschool year.

We have taken on board your suggestions and we are working within the Aistear, Siolta Practice Guide as we are always committed to work to improve our service to provide a good quality service to all the children, parents and staff.