An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Daddy Daycare
09WX0022

Melwood House, Hollyfort
Gorey, Co Wexford

Date of inspection: 09 May 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Daddy Daycare is a privately owned and managed playschool service located in a private dwelling outside Gorey, Co Wexford. It was established in 2006 and caters for children ranging in age from 2 years 9 months. 19 of the 23 children in the setting on the day of the inspection are participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. The owner/manager is the lead practitioner and the two other practitioners have been in the centre for a number of years. 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 will 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 good.
- Children and parents are warmly welcomed and children are generally well settled.
- It is challenging for the children to develop a sense of belonging as they are not assigned a designated room or a key person.
- Adult/child relationships are generally good and children are praised and encouraged.
- The setting is spread over three rooms and the children can move through these rooms and avail of all the resources throughout the morning.
- The spread of children through the rooms challenges practitioners and makes it difficult to respond effectively to all the children and ensure their meaningful participation.
- The daily routine is commendably flexible including a dedicated snack time that provides a beneficial opportunity for children to talk and to interact with the practitioners and each other.

Actions advised

- In order to strengthen the children’s sense of belonging and emotional security, it is advised that whole-group activities are limited to short periods and that children are regularly divided into small groups supported by a practitioner.
- Practitioners are advised to complement the flexibility of the daily routine with a shared, dependable sequence of daily activities to support children’s sense of security, well-being and engagement.

AREA 2
QUALITY OF PROCESSES TO SUPPORT CHILDREN’S LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT

- The quality of the processes to support children’s learning and development is good.
- The long and short-term planning is broadly informed by Aistear: The Early Childhood Curriculum Framework and is displayed clearly in the service.
- The assessment approaches currently in use are not very helpful to the staff in planning for the children’s emerging interests or for progressing their learning.
- The practitioners know the children well and relationships are generally positive.
- There is an imbalance between child-led and adult-led learning as adults try to maintain contact with, and work with all the children for all of the time.
- Play is the central medium through which children develop and learn and the practitioners are very committed to promoting play.
- Both outdoor and indoor environments provide good space for play and engagement. There is a wide range of outdoor equipment available.
- While the children have access to some good indoor resources, the potential of the indoor environment has not been fully exploited.
Actions advised
• To support practitioners in planning the next steps in learning it is advised that more focused observations of the children’s learning and emerging interests be recorded and used to inform the planning and the resources.
• By introducing a key person system to work with small groups, a better balance between child-led and adult-led activities would be possible and practitioners would be able to both observe and respond to individual children more effectively.
• An audit of the indoor environment would be helpful in enabling the practitioners to improve the range and quality of the resources available and so enhance children’s opportunities for play, development and learning.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is fair.
• Most of the children readily engage in their chosen activities. Some children were unfocused in their activities and it took some time before practitioners were able to respond and support them.
• Children are encouraged to take turns and to take personal responsibility for themselves and their belongings.
• Circle time is effective in providing opportunities for children to talk and discuss areas of interest. The large number of children in the circle during circle time makes it difficult for all the children to participate.
• Efforts are being made to move away from the formal teaching of numbers and letters to developing an awareness of print, mathematical language and symbols in the environment and in the daily lives of the children.

Actions advised
• More small-group activities combined with the designing of distinct learning areas will enhance engagement, enjoyment and positive well-being.
• Children need further opportunities to discuss their thoughts, feelings and ideas. This will require more small-group discussions, access to a wider range of books and play activities and opportunities for music and movement.
• In order to assess children’s learning more clearly the recording of observations based on the children’s current skills, dispositions and emerging interests is advised.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
• The leader ensures that formal planning takes place and that opportunities are provided for informal review.
• Commendably, the vision for the service is developing towards an emergent, play-based approach but in these early stages there are aspects of practice that have not yet been clarified or explored as a team.
• There is a commitment among the staff to regular continuous professional development (CPD) and individuals have availed of various relevant courses.
• A good range of policies has been developed and is available to parents and some good home links have been established.

Actions advised
• As the service moves towards a more play-centred philosophy there is a need to clearly articulate its shared vision and curriculum approaches as a team and with parents.
• To ensure consistency in the application of positive behaviour strategies with children, further team discussion, reflection and availing of CPD opportunities in the area is advised.
CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the leader and the practitioners to bring about the improvements outlined above is good.
**Summary of Overall Inspection Findings**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Quality Level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<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>Good</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>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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Part A: Observations on the content of the inspection report

Part B: Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to address the actions advised in the inspection report

Smaller groups are now actioned (Area 1)
Emerging curriculum and child’s interests being recorded, actioned (Area 2)
Key person system will be introduced in September 2016 (Area 2)
Indoor environment to be reviewed, summer 2016 (Area 2)
Smaller groups for circle time actioned
Music and movement is and has always been part of DDC on a daily basis (Area 3)
Outlining curriculum and child’s interests to the parents will be actioned in September 2016

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