

An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna
Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection
Report

Temple Tots
11SO0081

Ardagelly
Templeboy
County Sligo

Date of inspection: 17 February 2017



CONTEXT OF SETTING

Temple Tots Crèche was established in 2004 and is a privately-owned, full day care service located in Templeboy, County Sligo. The service operates two morning sessions participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. One of the two sessions was observed on the day of inspection and there were fifteen children, the owner/manager and a practitioner present. The pedagogical approach adopted in this session is informed by the principles of the Montessori Method of education, the principles of *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and a play-based philosophy. The owner/manager attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, the setting chose to accept the report without response.

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.
- A warm and inviting atmosphere is evident. The practitioners have a positive regard for the children and their families. The manager ensures that she is available to greet and talk with the parents and children on arrival every day.
- Sensitivity for the children's well-being and emotional security was evident. The manager demonstrated a respectful and responsive approach with the children by taking the time to introduce each child to the new visitor.
- In the Montessori session, the children were given the opportunities to choose their own activities and were observed working through the various exercises with ease and confidence. The flow and time for child-initiated activity and sustained play was interrupted by the number of transitions in the routine. During the times of transition, the language used to guide the children towards positive behaviour was overly directive, in many instances.
- The children's sense of identity is nurtured in the setting. The children's name is displayed in print and the use of photographs signifies a place for their individual belongings. The family tree which is purposefully displayed in the hallway, involved the parents and children working together. At circle time, each child was also given the opportunity to talk about themselves and share their news with their friends.
- Opportunities are provided which bring together children, families and practitioners throughout the year. The parents participate in the seasonal activities, such as the St Patrick's Day parade, which is a much celebrated event in the pre-school setting.

Actions advised:

- A review of the structure and organisation of the daily routine is advised, and in particular, the number of transitions. The pillar on 'Transitions' in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*, in particular element 2, will help in this regard.
- The practitioners are advised to review the use of language when guiding children towards positive behaviour. The pillar in the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* on 'Nurturing and Extending Interactions', featuring information on the use of 'I statements' will be a valuable resource to support the adoption of this action advised.

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-based curriculum, informed by the standards and principles of *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* and *Aistear*, has been documented and is being used to support children's learning and development. The practitioners are using a short-term curriculum planning template from the *Aistear* toolkit. The information recorded on this template documents the adult-led themed activities but does not include information about the children's play and their emerging interests.

- The practitioners are using learning stories as an approach to record information about the children's learning. The observation process has developed throughout the year and the more recent observations effectively demonstrate what children are interested in and how they are using and engaging with the materials. This is valuable information which can be used to inform the practitioners' short-term planning.
- The good interactions observed on the day of inspection between the practitioners and the children were characterised by the reflective language and open-ended questions used during circle time and the story-time activity. This approach provided the children with the opportunity to share their own ideas and express their views and understanding about what was happening in the story. On the day of inspection, the arts and crafts activity was adult-directed and product-focused. There were opportunities during this activity, where the children's questions, stories and creative ideas could have been used as the key moments for learning. A greater use of a more playful approach instead of the template-based activities would better support the children's early literacy and numeracy experiences.
- The Montessori materials are used purposefully by the practitioners to enhance the children's understanding of early mathematical concepts and the control of error inherent in these exercises supports children's successful progression and mastery.
- The outdoor role play, games and the music and movement activity were playful and fun activities where the children enjoyed being imaginative, expressing themselves and moving their bodies in a dynamic and challenging way.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to ensure a more appropriate balance between the adult-led and child-led activities where children are given more opportunities to direct their own learning. This will help the practitioners find out more about what the children know, their interests and thinking, and use this information in the weekly planning of activities.
- It is advised that children's early numeracy and literacy skills be supported in their play. The practitioners can use the children's interests, everyday life experiences and the environment to help children make connections with the meaning and use of number, print and symbols.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- The children demonstrate enjoyment being with their friends and are excited and eager to talk about their favourite TV characters with each other. During the Montessori activity, the children were very focused on their activity and their motivation was reflected in the way they described and explained about what they were doing. The children demonstrated their problem-solving and engineering skills when building a television out of small blocks.
- The children are eager to ask questions and find out answers to things that interest them and what matters to them. This was evident during the arts and crafts activity when children wanted to talk about where their kite would fly to and where it would land. This conversation reflected the children's unique creativity and critical thinking and these are the moments that can be better used as important learning opportunities.
- The children are motivated and interested in their activities. The practical life and sensorial exercises effectively promote the children's sense of autonomy and understanding of the environment.
- The children are very kind and considerate with each other and are able to express their feelings and opinions when turn taking and sharing out roles. This was observed during the music and movement activity and in the farmer role play observed in the outdoor play environment.
- The children demonstrate excitement when talking about the things that matter to them. On the day of inspection, they enjoyed looking at the photographs from their year book. This type of activity encouraged the children to think about previous events and use language to describe what happened and what they did during these activities. This type of activity is not used to its full potential to support children's revisiting of their learning experiences and the consolidation of learning. The scrapbooks and photographs of children's learning experiences are developed to share with parents at the end of the year.

- The children interact with each other and engage in enjoyable interactions using verbal and non-verbal language, which was reflected during the music and movement activity and in the large group activity.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide time in the routine that will encourage more consultation, and reflecting with children about their everyday learning experiences. The practitioners can use and develop the existing practices in place to support this activity, such as the helper roles, roll call, the use of photographs, circle time and helping the children to draw up their rules for their playroom.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- An ethos of collaboration and partnership is evident between the manager and the practitioners. The manager has nurtured a supportive team structure among the staff who demonstrate commitment and openness to ongoing improvement in practice. When possible, the practitioners have attended in-service training events with the local Childcare Committee and they are very interested in accessing the mentoring and support services available to improve their practice in line with the standards and principles of *Síolta* and *Aistear*.
- The owner/manager is a good role model for the staff. She has written up a detailed curriculum statement that outlines a direction for the work of the setting. This document is a good starting point for the practitioners to reflect, review and decide on a shared vision of the principles of practice that will inform the quality of provision for children's learning experiences and development.
- The practitioners have adopted a number of strategies to establish positive relationships with the children's parents and families. This was reflected in the warm and sensitive interactions observed between the practitioners and parents on the day of inspection.
- The setting demonstrates a proactive approach to supporting children's transition to primary school. The manager liaises with the nearby primary school throughout the year. A resource tool is used to share information between the two settings to ensure the continuity in the children's educational experiences.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* to help them prioritise the areas for improvement, make changes, review and develop their practice to support the quality of provision for children's learning and development.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the staff to implement the actions advised above is very good. The manager's constructive engagement in the post-inspection professional dialogue reflects commendable commitment to ensuring ongoing improvement to support the quality of provision for children's learning and development.

Summary of Overall Inspection Findings

Area	Quality Level
Quality of context to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of processes to support children's learning and development	Good
Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements	Very good
Quality of management and leadership for learning	Very good

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

Excellent	Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.
Very good	Provision that is very good is highly effective in meeting the needs of children.
Good	Provision that is good is effective in meeting the needs of children but with some aspects to be developed.
Fair	Provision that is fair requires practice to be improved to meet the needs of children.
Poor	Provision that is poor is inadequate and requires significant improvement to meet the needs of children.