An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Tiny Friends Creche
12LK0169

Old School House
Mungret
Co Limerick

Date of Inspection: 19th September 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING

Tiny Friends Crèche is a privately managed full-day care service located in a purpose-built accommodation in Mungret Co Limerick. It provides two Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programmes in the morning catering for 25 children. Only 1 ECCE programme was inspected and 10 of the 12 children enrolled were in attendance with 2 practitioners. The majority of the children and 1 of the practitioners are new to the setting. 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.
- The practitioners are caring and warm in their interactions with the children. Respectful relationships are fostered through the practitioners’ natural spontaneous conversations with the children and their use of questions that relate directly to the children’s lives.
- The organisation of snack time in the setting provides worthwhile opportunities for the children to engage meaningfully with one another, thereby supporting the development of their social skills. The children and practitioners sat together in small groups.
- The programme of activities is very structured with a large focus on whole group adult directed activities.
- Gathering photographs of the children and their families has commenced and making these visible and accessible to the children will greatly support their sense of identity and belonging.

Actions advised

- Practitioners are advised to provide more opportunities for the children to be active agents in their own learning and, in particular, to increase the time available to the children to play, explore and investigate in an open-ended way on their own and in smaller groups.
- To further support children sense of familiarity and security, the creation of a large visual time-table that is flexible to the needs of the group is advised. This will support children to anticipate what happens during the morning session.

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.
- The practitioners are currently engaged in the development of a more emergent, enquiry-based curriculum informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework.
- A key person approach is employed for conducting observations of the children and observations of the children have commenced. The practitioners demonstrate a keen ability to identify individual Children’s current interests and strengths. However there is very little account taken of these individual interests, needs and strengths within the current planning of experiences and the resources provided.
- A chill out area with books, soft toys and soft seating is provided, which supports children’s sense of well-being and emotional security, a small number of children were observed settling into this area on arrival before the programme started.
- Play opportunities and play resources within the ECCE programme of activities are limited.
- The children have regular access to a well-resourced outdoor learning environment which supports their emerging physical and social skills.

Actions advised
• It is advised that more play opportunities and play materials are made available to the children. In particular more opportunities for engaging in a variety of types of play such as exploratory and creative play, imaginative play, socio-dramatic play, physical play and construction play. The ‘Play’ pillar in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide would be helpful in this regard.
• It is advised that children’s individual interests, needs, prior learning and strengths are visible and taken account of within the planning of experiences, activities and the resources.
• It is advised that a planned approach is adopted to developing children’s dispositions, values, attitudes, skills, knowledge and understanding. The learning record template provided in the Aistear Síolta practice guide will help in this regard.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
• The quality of the children’s learning experiences and achievements is good.
• Almost all of the children are engaged by and interested in exploring the materials and resources available to them, as demonstrated during free-play outdoors and music-time and play-time indoors.
• The children are secure
• The children spend a considerable amount of time waiting for adults to direct them and they have limited opportunity and time to initiate activities or be active agents in their own learning.
• The practitioners provide clear positive feedback and praise for positive behaviours demonstrated by the children.
• The children are developing the ability to play co-operatively, as demonstrated during their outdoor play and in their dressing-up activities.
• The children are very well-behaved and it is obvious they understand and follow the rules and boundaries of acceptable behaviour.

Actions advised
• It is advised that children be enabled to engage in more self-initiated, purposeful and challenging play experiences that sustain their interest and motivation and lead to real and meaningful learning experiences.
• It is advised that the practitioners celebrate more purposefully what the children can do and share the children’s achievements and progression in their learning with children and parents.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of the management and leadership for learning is good.
• The manager has a very good appreciation of the importance of supporting staff to engage in CPD and reflective practise.
• The parents meet formally with the practitioners to discuss their children learning twice a year and have opportunity informally every day to talk with the practitioners about their child. Photographic displays of the children engaging in activities are positioned outside the room for parents to view and details regarding relevant operational matters such as information on fees, staff, policies and procedures in the setting are provided in a parent handbook.
• The manager and staff meet regularly to discuss policies, procedures and the programme of activities for the children.

Actions advised.
• It is advised that the manager and practitioners use the Curriculum Foundations Pillar in the Aistear Síolta Practice Guide to reflect on their current underlying philosophy, their vision and existing practices with a view to improving the processes in the setting and the learning experiences and achievements of the children.
• It is advised that the manager and practitioners develop a more systematic formalised system to share regular updates and information to parents on their children’s learning and achievements. The ‘Partnership with Parents’ pillar in the Aistear, Síolta practice guide will aid in this regard.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the practitioners in this setting to implement the actions advised above is good, as evidenced by their commitment to reflect on practice and their engagement in discussion during the post-inspection meeting.
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>
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<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>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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