Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

REPORT

Little People Pre-school
13LH0157

The Foy Centre, Dundalk Road,
Carlingford, Co Louth

Date of inspection: 20 April 2016
CONTEXT OF SETTING
Little People Pre-school is a privately owned service which is in operation since 2012. It is currently located in the Foy Centre, Carlingford, Co Louth and caters for twenty-two preschool children. The owner/manager, 1 assistant practitioner and a student on work experience were present with 21 children on the day of the inspection. The setting was given the opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report; the service 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 very good.
• A warm, caring and affirming atmosphere characterised by responsive and positive adult-child and child-child relationships is evident.
• Practitioners promote children’s independence and nurture their sense of identity as capable and confident learners while providing suitable reassurance where required.
• Children are recognised as active agents and are provided with ample opportunities to make choices and decisions.
• Consistent daily routines are in place with a suitable range of strategies used effectively to support children in their transitions from one activity to the next. The learning opportunities inherent in the everyday routines are used effectively by the practitioners.
• Regular opportunities are provided to bring together the children, their families and practitioners within the setting. Families are encouraged to visit the setting on Fridays to share in the children’s achievements.

Action advised
• To build on the very good practices established, practitioners are advised to introduce a key person system and to designate time for key groups of children to come together daily to engage in a shared, collaborative learning activity.

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.
• A thematic approach to planning has been adopted and is informed by Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework. This supports the implementation of a broad-based curriculum and a cohesive learning experience for children. It is noted that information about children’s emerging interests together with information relating to their developmental needs is currently not used to its full potential to inform planning and to support practice.
• Practitioners are clearly aware of their role as educators and interact with the children in a positive and playful manner in order to support their learning and development. They provide timely, stage-appropriate feedback to children to consolidate and extend their learning.
• Play is central to the curriculum and children have opportunities for free play and station play activities each day. Some large-group learning activities are also provided.
• The indoor environment is well-resourced and used judiciously to ensure children play in a variety of contexts throughout the day. The accessibility of materials and resources facilitates children’s active involvement in their play.
• Provision for children’s gross motor development in the indoor learning space is commended. The use of outdoor space is currently limited although practitioners continue to strive to develop this aspect of provision.
• Children’s creations are respectfully displayed and include many individual process art pieces.

Actions advised
• Practitioners are advised to make greater use of information about children’s emerging interests and their developmental needs to inform planning and to support practice.
• It is suggested that increasing the opportunities for small group activities will allow practitioners to facilitate collaborative learning experiences for children.

AREA 3
QUALITY OF CHILDREN’S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS
• The quality of children’s learning experiences and achievements is very good.
• Children are involved, engaged and enjoy their play and activity throughout the session.
• The children show an understanding of the expectations around behaviour in the setting with many illustrations of turn-taking, cooperation, collaboration and taking responsibility observed.
• Children’s creativity is celebrated and nurtured through their learning experiences.
• It is evident that children are developing appropriate gross and fine motor skills in accordance with their stage of development.
• Children demonstrate interest and positive engagement in a suitable range of mark-making activities.
• Children avail of some opportunities to reflect on their learning and to share their thoughts and feelings with each other.
• Information documented about children’s learning reflects some of their key achievements.

Actions advised
• Children will benefit from additional opportunities, to reflect on their learning and to communicate their experiences, thoughts, ideas and feelings with each other in pairs and small groups.
• Extending the range of assessment information gathered and sharing some records of children’s achievements with the children and with their parents will enrich the learning experiences and potential outcomes for them.

AREA 4
QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING
• The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
• Management and staff display a strong commitment to delivering a high quality early education service to the local community and to ongoing improvement in the quality of provision.
• Management and staff avail of continuing professional development opportunities.
• Strong and effective teamwork is evident with practitioners engaging in regular informal professional dialogue.
• A suitable range of communication channels has been established to support positive relationships with parents.
• There are strong links established with the local school and children are effectively supported in their transitions from pre-school to primary school.

Action advised
• Practitioners are advised to use the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide to support their self-review practices and the implementation of prioritised improvement initiatives.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE
Staff members in the setting demonstrate a very good capacity to implement the actions advised in this report.
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>Very Good</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quality of management and leadership for learning</td>
<td>Very Good</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language used in Early-Years Education-focused Inspection reports

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision Quality Level</th>
<th>Description</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent</td>
<td>Provision that is excellent is exemplary in meeting the needs of children.</td>
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<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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Published June 2016