An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

Early-Years Education-focused Inspection

Report

Sticky Fingers Childcare Centre
15KE0346

Alexandra Park
Clane
County Kildare

Date of inspection: 22 September 2016

AN ROINN OIDEACHAIS AGUS SCILEANNA | DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SKILLS
INSPECTORATE

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Sticky Fingers, a purpose built privately owned Crèche is located in Clane in County Kildare. It has been in operation for one year and engages in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme across four rooms in four morning sessions with four practitioners. Each room is given the name of a flower. The room inspected caters for eleven children. On the day of inspection there were eleven children and one practitioner present in the room. The Crèche manager attended the 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 very good.
- Children and parents are greeted warmly on arrival. Parents drop and collect their children directly to and from the pre-school room.
- The routine of the day and samples of the children's learning and experiences together with the curriculum plan are very visible to parents outside the room. All displays for parents carefully connect children's learning to *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*.
- The practitioner uses even tones, positions herself well in the room and shows positive regard for children and clear dedication. Children are viewed as active agents in their play activities.
- A visual daily routine is in place and the children show awareness of this routine. Verbal reminders are used effectively to help children transition from one activity to another.
- Children hang up their own coats, tidy up after their play and lunch and demonstrate very good self-management and independent skills.
- A visual display supports the children to manage their own behaviour and the practitioner models some guidance and encouragement towards positive behaviour. Children are still learning how to share toys and there were instances of disagreements observed over the sharing of some toys.
- Children's sense of identity and belonging is nurtured in many different ways. Photographs of children engaging in different activities are displayed in the room. A family tree and individual photographs of each child together with a display of birthdays are also visible for the children.
- Very good recognition is given to visual displays celebrating cultural diversity within the setting. This is evident in a display of key sayings in the different languages of the children attending the service. It is also reflected in the range of books and by celebrations of different cultural events relevant to the children attending the setting.

Actions advised

- Building on the good strategy in place around supporting children to move from one activity to another, it is advised that a variety of transitioning strategies be used to make transitioning more playful for children, such as songs and rhymes.
- It is advised that practitioners extend positive behaviour management strategies to support children in managing their own behaviour and resolving their own conflicts. Specific strategies suggested are, the continuous use of positive reinforcement, encouraging children to work together to resolve their own conflicts and through careful observations.

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.
- An emergent curriculum is in place at the setting which is informed by *Aistear: the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework* and short-term, medium-term and long-term planning is in place. Short-term planning takes account of children's cultural backgrounds, their needs, strengths and some emergent interests.

- A range of assessment strategies is in place. Examples include strengths-based observations, photographs and learning journals. Parents receive regular feedback about their child's learning and development.
- The indoor environment is very bright and inviting and laid out into discrete areas, comprising a wide range of resources. Good use of labelling is evident. A very good range of literacy and numeracy resources is available and varied books are accessible to the children together with a soft seating area to encourage use. Books are relevant, related to children's interests, needs, the seasons and reflect cultural diversity. Books are available to the children in different languages relevant to them.
- The large outdoor area provides ample space for a variety of play opportunities for children, such as running, climbing, sand play and mark-making.
- The practitioner uses some good interaction strategies to facilitate some learning experiences as reflected in an exercise with sound boxes where she mirrored the child's language and actions very well to consolidate and extend the learning. However, there were occasions on the day of the inspection, where the practitioner was inconsistent in the messages given to children, in particular in relation to a younger child who needed more support.
- Emergent language and numeracy skills were supported though the extension of conversations and through the good use of songs and rhymes.

Actions advised

- To sustain and extend children's play experiences in line with an emergent curriculum, it is advised that short-term planning be informed to a greater extent by children's interests and developmental levels.
- It is advised that the practitioner reflect on her interaction strategies and observation skills to ensure that the messages given to children are consistent, clear and framed for young children to understand. Also that they take into account learning styles, children's individual needs and ages.

AREA 3

QUALITY OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING EXPERIENCES AND ACHIEVEMENTS

- The quality of the children's learning experiences and achievements is very good.
- Overall the children demonstrate very good levels of enjoyment in their learning activities and in their play. They particularly enjoy outdoors, water play and sand play.
- There are very good opportunities for children to engage in small group, large group, paired and individual activity. Children engage freely in their environment.
- At circle time, children engaged in varied songs and rhymes which they clearly enjoyed. Circle time was used effectively as an opportunity for children to get to know each other. To support children's sense of well-being this can be further extended to encourage children to discuss their feelings and to recap and recall.
- Special teddy bears are used to connect home and school and support children to develop a positive sense of well-being and security. The teddy bears go home for visits and come back in with stories of their visit.
- There are very good opportunities for children to engage in process art and in mark-making. Children's work is displayed on the wall outside the room.
- The children are learning to interact with each other, are beginning to form friendships and display confidence.
- The children are beginning to understand the rules of the service, listen, take turns and self-regulate throughout the morning.

Actions advised

- It is advised that children's own creations are displayed within the room to provide continuous visibility to children about their own learning.
- The good practices in place at circle time can be extended to provide opportunities for children to name and discuss their emotions. The feeling puppets in place can support this further.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The newly appointed manager is to be commended for her commitment and interest to the continuing development of quality provision at the service. The manager reports that staff mentoring and support takes place.
- Staff meetings are held monthly and the views of staff are sought at self–review. An example of this practice is the completion of staff surveys designed to elicit suggestions for continuous improvement and also to provide feedback on initiatives that have been put into place.
- There is a good commitment shown by both the manager and practitioner to engage in professional development and to reflect on practice.
- Communication is fostered between families at the setting both informally and formally. Parents are fully informed about their child's learning through *Aistear*, via Facebook, noticeboards and regular newsletters which are printed in different languages to support parents for whom English is not their first language.
- Transitions between home and school are supported by a 'special teddy' who travels between the two and shares stories of his/her experiences.
- At enrolment, parents complete an 'All About Me' booklet which documents children's interests, strengths and needs. This rich information can be used to good effect for emergent curriculum planning to support children's experiences and learning.
- Children are supported in their transitions to school through discussions and activities and a transitions policy is in place.

Action advised

- Management is advised to continue with regular individual mentoring with practitioners to support them in engaging in professional reflection and enhancing experiences for children.

CAPACITY TO IMPLEMENT THE ACTIONS ADVISED ABOVE

The capacity of the service to implement the actions advised above is very good. They demonstrate very strong commitment to ongoing improvement in 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	**Very 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.

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