An Roinn Oideachais agus Scileanna

Department of Education and Skills

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Tiny Tots Playgroup
Setting Address	Dunhill Sports Centre Dunhill County Waterford
DCYA number	09WD0019

Date of Inspection: 22-10-2019

An Roinn Oideachais
agus Scileanna
Department of
Education and Skills

WHAT IS AN EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION?

The Early Years Education Inspection (EYEI) model is used to provide evaluative information, advice and support in relation to education provision in a pre-school setting participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. These inspections affirm good practice and advise actions, where appropriate, to aid the further development of education provision in the setting.

HOW TO READ THIS REPORT

During this inspection, the inspector evaluated and reported under the following headings or areas of enquiry:

1. Quality of the context to support children's learning and development
2. Quality of processes to support children's learning and development
3. Quality of children's learning experiences and achievements
4. Quality of management and leadership for learning

Inspectors describe the quality of each of these areas using the Inspectorate's quality continuum which is shown on the final page of this report. The quality continuum provides examples of the language used by inspectors when evaluating and describing the quality of the setting's provision in each area.

Early-Years Education Inspection

Date of inspection	22-10-2019
Inspection activities undertaken • Meeting with setting manager/practitioner and practitioner • Observation of interactions during the pre-school session	• Interaction with children • Review of relevant documents • Feedback to setting manager/practitioner and practitioner

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Tiny Tots Playgroup was established in 1991. It is located in the Sports Centre in the rural village of Dunhill, Co. Waterford. This community setting provides a morning sessional service for children participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. On the day of the inspection, the manager/practitioner, a practitioner and four children were present. The manager/practitioner and the practitioner attended the post-inspection feedback meeting. The early years setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised of the report, and the response 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 very good.
- The practitioners have successfully created a warm and welcoming atmosphere. Parents enter the setting on arrival and this time is used to share information and to engage in relaxed conversations.
- The children enter the setting with great enthusiasm. They choose confidently from a range of activities and experiences.
- Interactions between the practitioners and the children are extremely thoughtful and respectful. The practitioners share many caring and affectionate moments with the children throughout the morning.
- The children's identity and belonging is supported in a number of ways. These include, photographs of the children, names on their placemats and examples of their individual mark making which are displayed prominently throughout the setting. During the inspection, a child used colouring pencils, glue and wool to create her self-portrait. The children's families and the wider community are not currently represented in the setting.
- The practitioners use kind and even tones to affirm and encourage the children. They provide positive feedback to the children, such as, 'You figured it out yourself'.
- Snack time provides an opportunity for the practitioners and the children to sit and eat together. During this time, they engage in relaxed conversations about the children's families, their recent experiences and upcoming events.
- Transitions from one activity to the next are signalled in advance by the practitioners and a timer is used to provide a visual prompt for the children. The practitioners respectfully consult the children in relation to upcoming transitions. The children's sense of security and engagement during transition times is also promoted through the consistent use of a visual daily routine.
- The children are developing very positive connections with their local community. In the past, the children have been visited by fire-fighters and have taken part in a children's fitness programme in the Sports Centre. Spring lambs from a nearby farm were also brought into the setting. The children are very visible in the local community. On the day of the inspection, they chatted with many community members during a nature walk in the nearby Eco Park.

Action advised

- In order to further support the children's sense of identity and belonging, the practitioners are advised to provide and use imagery of the children's families and the local community in the learning room.

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.
- Play is the central medium through which children learn. A range of play types, including sensory, creative and imaginary play, is promoted and children have ample time to engage in play-based learning.
- There are clearly-defined and well-resourced interest areas, including a creative area, a home corner and a construction area. The layout of the environment supports the promotion of the children's active engagement in purposeful play experiences.
- A curriculum statement informs the development of short-term plans. The short term plans include broad themes and activities to support the children's learning. There is evidence that the plans are flexible and that children's interests are used to inform group learning experiences.
- The practitioners record the children's learning in written observations. They document the children's group learning experiences through the use of photographs and brief descriptions of learning in a large journal. This journal is shared with parents throughout the year. A broader range of assessment methods would yield greater information to assist in identifying and planning for the next steps in individual children's' learning.
- The children's early literacy and numeracy skills are well supported through the use of songs, rhymes and the range of play materials. A variety of books are also displayed at child level.
- The practitioners effectively support and extend the children's learning. They use interactive approaches to capture the children's interests. They recently made a light-box to ignite the children's curiosity. The practitioners also encourage the children to problem solve and to predict. For example, a practitioner asked the children to predict what might happen when sand was mixed with the water.
- The children have regular opportunities to engage in outdoor play. They have access to the grounds of the local GAA club and are also regular visitors to the nearby Eco Park.

Actions advised

- The practitioners are advised to consistently record the children's interests and to use this information to plan meaningful learning experiences for each child.
- The practitioners are advised to develop a broader range of assessment methods to document the children's strengths, interests and progress. This could include learning records, observations, with photographs and descriptions of children's learning dispositions, along with the samples of their work.

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 present as happy and very content in the setting.
- The children make many choices in relation to their learning. They demonstrate engagement and high levels of enjoyment in their chosen activities and their sustained and purposeful play experiences.
- The children are articulate and confident communicators. They ask many questions, express their opinions and make requests. During snack time, some of the children described the taste of an orange as being 'a little bit sour'. Another child exclaimed, 'I have a great idea' as he shared his idea with his friends. The children are interested in what their friends and the practitioners have to say.
- The children are very creative. They use a variety of materials to represent their ideas. This is evident in their highly-developed mark making and paintings. The children recognise their own individual mark making on the wall and proudly draw attention to their creations.
- The children are developing their independent skills. They fill containers with water to wash vegetables and make soup in the home corner. They take responsibility for some small tasks

during the morning. The practitioners complete the majority of the tasks during snack time and tidy up time.

- There are very positive relationships between the children and their peers. The children demonstrate real enjoyment in the company of their friends. They play together co-operatively and show a sense of empathy for others. The children's acts of kindness are documented on a 'kindness chart' in the learning room.
- The children are developing a very good awareness of nature and the environment. For example, they stopped to examine insects, plants and flowers in detail during their nature walk. They also expressed great delight in running, jumping and splashing in muddy puddles.

Action advised

- The practitioners are advised to provide additional opportunities for the children to develop their independent skills and to take increased responsibility for tasks throughout the morning.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is good.
- The manager/practitioner and practitioner present as a caring and committed team. Their commitment to providing quality learning experiences for children is evident.
- The practitioners recognise the value of continuing professional learning. They have completed a wide range of professional learning programmes, including training on *Aistear; the Early Childhood Curriculum Framework*, *Síolta, the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education* and the *Diversity, Equality and Inclusion Guidelines.* One of the practitioners is currently participating in the Leadership for Inclusion in the Early Years (LINC) programme and has completed training on Lámh, a manual sign system.
- Evaluation and reflection currently happens on an informal basis. The manager/practitioner and practitioner engage in daily reflective discussions.
- Effective communication with parents is evident. A parent handbook, with information on the setting, is provided for parents prior to their child starting in the setting. A newsletter and photographs are shared through a social media application. Information on children's learning is shared regularly through informal discussion.
- An effective open door policy is in place and there are opportunities for parents to come into the setting throughout the year. Parents are invited to attend outings and extended family members are welcome to attend the Christmas show and graduation.
- The manager/practitioner avails of support from the local county childcare committee and engages with an external support agency. Valuable links have been made with external professionals to support the participation of all children.
- There are some strategies in place to support the children's transition from the pre-school to primary school. Children return to visit the setting after they have started primary school. This provides an opportunity for children to discuss life in a primary school. The practitioners discuss the transition to school with the children and with parents.

Actions advised

- In order to enhance the current informal self-evaluation and reflection practices, the manager/practitioner and practitioner are advised to use the *Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide*. This will support the affirmation of good practice and the identification of areas for development.
- The manager/practitioner is advised to provide more regular, formal opportunities to share the children's learning with parents.
- In order to build on their current good practice in supporting children's transition from pre-school to primary school, the practitioners are advised to create more formal links with the local primary schools and to use additional play resources, stories and projects.

Summary of Overall Inspection

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	**Good**

Language used in Early-Years Education 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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APPENDIX

SETTING RESPONSE TO THE REPORT

SUBMITTED ON BEHALF OF THE SETTING

Area 1 Observations on the content of the inspection report

- We found the feedback and the recommendations in the report to be positive and helpful.
- We have implemented many of the recommendations.

Area 2 Follow-up actions planned or undertaken since the completion of the inspection activity to implement the findings and recommendations of the inspection.