An Roinn Oideachais

Department of Education

EARLY YEARS EDUCATION INSPECTION

REPORT

Setting Name	Tiny Tots Preschool
Setting Address	Slieveroe Athenry County Galway H65E330
DCEDIY NO. **TUSLA REG NO.**	TU2015GY271 09GY0005

Date of Inspection: 10-12-2021

This inspection took place in the context of public health restrictions necessary to limit the spread of Covid-19

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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(s) 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	10-12-2021
Inspection activities undertaken • Pre-inspection meeting conducted by telephone with the setting owner/manager • Introduction with assistant early years educator • Observation of interactions during the morning session • Interaction with children	• Review of learning environments • Review of information documented on the children's learning • Review of relevant setting documents • Post-inspection feedback meeting with the setting owner/manager and the assistant early years educator

CONTEXT OF SETTING

Tiny Tots Preschool is a private sessional preschool setting. It is located in a rural area outside Athenry, County Galway. On the day of the inspection, the owner/manager, the assistant educator and sixteen children were present. The setting was given an opportunity to comment in writing on the findings and actions advised in this report, and the response submitted on behalf of the setting can 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.
- A very welcoming and warm atmosphere is evident in the setting.
- The daily routine offers children opportunities to choose and organise their learning in the indoor and outdoor learning environments. On the day of the inspection the children engaged in good continuous periods of self-directed learning through play. There is scope to extend the duration of these periods.
- Educators signal changes in the routine and involve the children in moving from one part of the routine to the next.
- Lunchtime routines very effectively promote the children's communication and social skills.
- Educators consistently interact with the children in a caring manner, demonstrating positive regard towards the children. At times, there were missed opportunities by the educators to support the children to be more independent, such as hand and nose hygiene matters.
- Very good efforts are made to connect the children to their community. Members of the community join the children in the setting to share information about their roles and skills. Each term the children spend time in a local wooded area.

Actions advised

- Educators are advised to review the daily routine and extend the time allocated for child-led learning through play. A minimum of one continuous hour for children to engage in play is advised within the daily routine.
- To further support children to be independent in managing their own personal care needs, educators are advised to consistently support the children in developing their self-care skills.

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 documented curriculum is well organised to support the children's learning through play. It is informed by the Montessori approach to education. The curriculum is not fully reflective of *Aistear, the Early Education Curriculum Framework*.

- A suitable balance is provided between child-initiated and educator-initiated activities. This promotes the view of children as active learners.
- Curriculum plans are displayed for parents. They are suitably organised on a long-term, medium-term and short-term bases. These plan do not closely reflect the varying interests of the children.
- The educators complete progress reports on each child which highlight the children's skills. Observations recorded capture learning and identify next steps in children learning journey.
- Educators work together with the children in conversations which provide opportunities to discuss and think about problems or challenges in a meaningful way. They actively extend the children's thinking and language in their interactions with them.
- The prepared indoor learning environment effectively stimulates and supports the children's learning. A large number of puzzles dominate one area of the room. Some practical life materials and exercises are available.
- The spacious outdoor learning environment is accessed frequently by the children. It provides the children with highly effective sensory experiences. They can freely explore and manipulate a range of natural materials. The new covered area provides shelter from the elements and supports year round outdoor play.
- Irish language words, phrases and songs are used with the children on a daily basis. Educators plan suitable activities to support the children to develop oral language skills.
- An inclusive ethos is adopted in which all children are valued and support is sought to optimise their full learning potential. Educators work closely with early intervention professionals.

Actions advised

- Educators are advised to draw connections between the documented curriculum and *Aistear*. The curriculum should reflect the principles, aims and learning goals of *Aistear*.
- To support the development of an emergent curriculum, educators are advised to incorporate the varying interest of children when planning for their learning and development.
- It is advised that the organisation of the indoor learning environment be reviewed. The outcome of this review needs to lead to greater accessibility for children to practical life materials. The vast majority of puzzles could be stored away and rotated as children's needs arise.

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 display high levels of engagement and great enjoyment in their learning through play.
- They have many opportunities to make choices and lead their learning. On the day of the inspection the children suggested moving like a tiger, during the music and movement activity.
- The children display a strong interest in books and listening to stories. They know a wide range of rhymes and songs in English and Irish. These activities very effectively support their emergent language and literacy skills.
- A number of writing and mathematical activities are based on templates and colouring-in sheets. These activities were not reflective of the curriculum plans and were not optimal for young learners.
- Children demonstrate their social skills in playing cooperatively with each other. They enjoy positive relationships with the educators and their peers. On many occasions, the children used very respectful language in their interactions and they used timers to manage turn-taking.
- The children use their developing communication skills to share their thoughts, feelings and ideas. The whole group news time activity, where a child shares a story and the other children can ask a question, is not suitably organised to maximise the engagement of all children.
- Children build their knowledge of the natural environment through regular outdoor experiences. They engage in projects such as planting vegetables.

Actions advised

- It is advised that the use of template-based sheets to support literacy and mathematical skills be greatly reduced. Educators are advised to further promote hands-on, concrete experiences as highlighted in curriculum plans.
- Educators are advised to divide the children into smaller groups for the news time/question and answer session to ensure that every child can contribute and engage.

AREA 4

QUALITY OF MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP FOR LEARNING

- The quality of management and leadership for learning is very good.
- The roles and responsibilities of educators are clearly defined and each educator has opportunities throughout the session to lead learning.
- Regular monthly meetings are used as opportunities to support the day-to-day organisation of educational experiences. During these meetings the educators share information about the children's learning and development, and review practice.
- The reviewing of practice is completed informally and not yet documented.
- Taking account of the public health guidance, there is an open-door policy in operation and an effective two-way sharing of information between the setting and parents. Information is shared through social media, text message groups and updates on curriculum topics being explored.
- To support the children to settle into the setting with ease, children and their parents are invited to attend for a short visit before they are formally enrolled. Information gathered about the child informs curriculum plans to best meet their needs.
- The educators prepare the children for the transition to primary school through discussions and planned activities.
- Strengths-based information is gathered in a booklet on each child and shared with the local school. Previously the school principal visited the children in the preschool.

Action advised

- The setting is advised to introduce more formal self-evaluation practices. To this end, the use of the evaluation templates in *the Aistear, Síolta Practice Guide* would be helpful as a means of establishing more professional self-reflection practices.

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	**Very 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

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

In response to my inspection, I will address the following issues as follows:

A) I will reduce the number of jigsaws at present and make a practical life shelf.
B) I will remove files containing templates of pencil work.
C) I will adapt my curriculum to be more inclusive of Aistear and Siolta and engage with the four pillars of Aistear.
D) I will incorporate a survey each year for parents regarding childrens interests.
E) I will show emerging interests of children on our weekly theme sheet.
F) I will use the self evaluation tool in Aistear to monitor practicians progress.