

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC006
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Name of Service:	ABC Academy
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Address of Service:	Chapel Road, Kilworth, Fermoy, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P61 C434
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Name of Registered Provider:	Keith Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F. Collins
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

ABC Academy is a privately owned sessional service based on Chapel Road in the village of Kilworth, North Cork.

The service offers a sessional service from 9.20am to 12.20pm daily for children aged from 2 to 6 years.

The service is also registered to provide school aged childcare.

The premises is purpose-built with two pre-school rooms in use. The service has access to a large car park to the front of the premises, which allows for the safe drop off and collection of the children attending.

The premises consists of an entrance, an office, a kitchen, playrooms and two outdoor areas.

The outdoor areas are to the rear and the side of the premises, which are enclosed by high fencing.

Staffing

There were eight adults working in the service. Seven of the eight adults work directly with the children. The adults that work directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 (1),(2),(4)

Regulation 10

Regulation 11 (1), (2)

Regulation 19 (1)(a)

Regulation 23

Regulation 25 (1)

Regulation 29 (d), (e)

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and two named deputies. All three staff were present on the day of inspection.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and both deputies were on the premises during the operation of the service.
 - (c) The staff were aware of the management structure within the service.

(2) There were eight staff employed in the service.

All eight staff files were assessed.

- (a) Twelve of the sixteen references required were available from past employers. All twelve references were validated as required.

- (b) Four of the sixteen references were available from sources other than a past employer, and all four references were validated.
- (c) Garda Vetting was available for all eight staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was required for two staff who had resided outside the country for greater than six consecutive months. Both police vetting disclosures were available on file.
- (4) Seven of the eight staff that worked in the service held a relevant qualification on the National Qualifications Framework at Level 5 to Level 8.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The policy on infection control was reviewed and was in keeping with best practice guidelines.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The service had appropriate numbers of adults working directly with the children throughout the sessional service.
- (2) There were 16 children in Montessori 2 being cared for by three adults. The children were aged between 4-5 years.

There were 14 children attending Montessori 1 on the day of inspection. These children were aged between 2-4 years and were cared for by four adults, one of whom was employed under the access and inclusion model scheme.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- Nutritious snacks were provided by parents/ guardians and were eaten at snack time. Each child ate their snack, and each child appeared to have enough to eat. Drinks were easily accessible in both care rooms on low shelves.
- The children were observed to toilet independently, and staff were available to assist when required.
- The children who wished to opt out of activities were allowed to do so. In Montessori 1, the children could access the quiet area with child sized couches where they could sit with their peers. In this area, the children could access books from the library or rest with their friends.
- Children could move about freely and were afforded the opportunity to move when they wanted to do so.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The same adults cared for the children daily and a supportive relationship between the adults and children in each of the groups was evident.
- The staff interacted with each other and supported the children's activities as required.
- Staff were observed to sit with the children during small group play and at snack time, and provided support and engaged in conversation throughout.
- Transitions in Montessori 2 were managed by giving the children timely notice to ensure they were prepared to move from one activity to the next.
- The staff supported a language rich environment where the staff spoke with the children in small groups and individually. They also engaged in large group play and storytelling.
- The children chose their own play activities and interacted with their peers throughout

- The children in both care rooms played together in the late morning after snack time and before children went home. This allowed for peers to mix and created social opportunities.
- Communication with parents was face to face at the start and end of the session.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The following was observed on the day of inspection:

- The indoor play facilities consisted of two playrooms.
Montessori 1 was where the younger children attended and had resources suitable to their age and stage of development.
Montessori 2 was where the older children attended. The children had access to resources that were age appropriate and provided challenge to them. Examples of these were smaller blocks, stackable bricks and shape sorters.
- The resources supported sensory play with the children in Montessori 2 observed doing arts and crafts activities and making play dough. They were also observed cutting and drawing for their art activity.
- Each of the care rooms had appropriate height tables with suitable chairs for the children who were observed to partake in tabletop activities and sit for snack.
- Children in Montessori 2 were observed to play with dress up clothes, which supported imaginary play and staff were observed to help them with getting these on and off.
- The shelving units where the activities and toys were stored were open and accessible to the children providing a variety of activities. This afforded the children independent access to the activities and allowed them choice of what they played with.
- There was a selection of activities inclusive of arts and crafts equipment, jigsaws, shape sorters and building blocks, in both care rooms. The children were observed to use these throughout the morning, promoting sensory, fine motor and cognitive development.
- Children in Montessori 2 were observed to participate in group activities indoors by pretending to be flying like a bee or doing jumping jacks.

OUTDOOR PLAY FACILITIES:

- The service had two outdoor play areas. The space at the rear of the premises was covered in grass, and at the side of the building was covered in soft matting.

- The grass area had a mud kitchen and had goals set up so the children could play football. The children were observed to play on a pretend bus using chairs set up in rows as they were pretending to go on the bus for their school tour.
- The soft play area had space for ride on toys, climbing frames and tyres on the ground to create space for risky play.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

1. The rest area in Montessori 2 was insufficient, with a mat and two cushions. This was located inside the door from the hall and was not sufficient for the number of children attending in this room to allow them to opt out of activities and rest when needed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Two child sized couches have been added to the room to allow children to rest and relax when they require same. The couches will be a permanent fixture in Montessori room 2.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A photograph of the two couches has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met following the actions taken by the registered provider.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The external doors to the front and the doors to each care room, as accessed at the side of the building, were secured with electromagnetic locks or thumb turn locks. This prevented any child from gaining access to the road unaccompanied and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.
- The doors from the main reception area into the care rooms were secured by electromagnetic locks, and this ensured the children could not gain access to the other rooms within the service unaccompanied.

- There were no long glass doors in the service that the children could walk into, as each door had a section through the middle identifying that it was a door.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.
- There was no heavy equipment or furniture that could be pulled onto a child.
- The flexes and cables assessed were in good condition and were out of reach of the children.
- The storage facilities were inaccessible to the children, and the waste was out of reach.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach in the kitchen area, which was not accessible to the children.
- No hot drinks were consumed in the service during the operation of the sessional service.
- Foods such as grapes were appropriately cut by parents/guardians to prevent choking.

Infection Control:

- The children were observed to wash their hands after going to the toilet, after painting/making playdough, when coming in from outside and before snack time.
- There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels available in the children's toilets and at the sinks in the care rooms. There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels in the adult toilet.
- Hand towels were disposed of in the pedal operated lidded bin in the care room.
- Coats and bags were stored off the ground and did not pose a risk of contamination.
- Snacks served to the children at snack time were stored in the fridge from the time the children arrived to the service up to snack time.
- The tables were cleaned with disinfected prior to the children sitting for their snack.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection. However, staff had a policy to follow in the event a child should require medication to be administered.

Fire Safety:

- The fire doors were unobstructed and were opened by thumb turn locks.
- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A staff member was observed changing a pull up nappy without using gloves. The nappy changing procedure indicated that gloves must be worn, and the staff member acknowledged that they did not use gloves when changing pull-ups. They did however wash their hands after changing the child. This poses a risk of contamination and potential cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- Staff have been reminded about the nappy changing procedure and this was discussed and reviewed at the team meeting where the nappy changing procedure was reviewed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- The agenda and minutes of the team meeting has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met and will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured that at all times when the service was operating, there was a person onsite with first aid training (FAR Training). One staff member in the service had first aid responder (FAR) training. Five staff had basic first aid training.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- The soft matting outside was splitting. It had some repairs carried out since the last inspection however the spaces between each square remained a hazard.
- Three hot water taps were not working, one in each of the children's toilets and one in the nappy changing room. This reduced the opportunity for children to wash their hands comfortably in warm water.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The matting on the playground has been repaired with soft matting granules and sealant. The registered provider has committed to ensuring the matting on the playground will be monitored and maintained as required.
2. The registered provider has stated all taps have been repaired by himself and stated that they will be monitored by the staff daily to ensure they are working and have hot water. The registered provider has stated that they have not been added to the checklist as they are to be monitored by the staff in each care room.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A photograph of the outdoor playground soft matting has been received.
2. A photograph of the broken tap and repaired taps have been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met and will be assessed on the next inspection.