

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC220
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Acorns Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Old School House, Chapel Hill, Monkstown, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	T12 N2D
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ruth Mcsweeney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/04/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	18	PM	n/a
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	V. McCarthy
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Little Acorn Montessori School operates out of a room situated on the first floor of a detached building that is located adjacent to the church and national school in Monkstown. Little Acorn Montessori School is a privately operated sessional service that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The service provides care for children aged 2 to 6 years. The service carries out a morning and an afternoon session and the hours of operation are 08.45 to 11.45 hours and 12.15 to 15.15 hours.

### Staffing

There are 4 adults, including the registered provider, attached to the service. Each of the adults work directly with the children and has a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) award in Early Childhood Care and Education. On the day of inspection there were 3 adults on the premises.

### 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.

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 person in charge, 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*

*(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 named person in charge and a deputy that could deputise as required.
  - (b) The named person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 7 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 4 adults attached to the service.
  - (b) There was 1 reference and required validation from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years in respect of each adult.
  - (d) Police vetting was available in respect of 1 adult that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of each of the adults.

### 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(3) On the morning of the inspection there were 3 adults working directly with 18 children. The ratio of staff to children exceeded the requirement of 1:11.

### 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 main entrance door leading into the building was secured by a lock that prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The outside staircase that was used to gain entry to the first-floor care room was fitted with a handrail and the stairway steps were provided with grips to reduce the risk of slips and falls.
- The high units throughout the care room were anchored securely.
- The strip light bulbs in the care room were each fitted with a protective cover.
- The blind cords attached to each window blind were safely secured by wall brackets.
- The window openings were positioned high on each of the windows and were not accessible to the children.

- The cleaning agents were stored on a high shelf out of children’s reach.
- The 2 first aid boxes were stored out of children’s reach.
- The 2 fire extinguishers were wall mounted securely off the floor.
- The leads and flexes attached to the stereo and printer were kept out of children’s reach.
- The wash hand basins were provided with thermostatically controlled warm water that was maintained less than 43°C. The water temperature was recorded at 27.2°C during the inspection

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. There were 2 containers of shaving foam that had “keep out of children’s reach” written on them, stored in a low unsecured press in the care room that were potentially accessible to an unsupervised child and posed as a hazardous risk.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. During a conversation with the inspector on 17 April 2024, the registered provider informed the inspector that the 2 containers of shaving foam had been removed from the premises. The registered provider included in her written response to the inspectorate dated 01 May 2024 that shaving foam had been removed.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. The registered provider stated in her written response to the inspectorate dated 01 May 2024 that shaving foam will no longer be used by her service. Copies of the services’ policies were submitted to the inspectorate for review, and it was stated under the section ‘Selecting Play Equipment and Materials Policy’ that shaving foam will not be permitted in the classroom.

### Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the registered provider was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements.

## 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.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*

*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*

*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

The service provided evidence that 1 adult had up to date training in first aid response (FAR) and that this adult was always on the premises.

(2)

(a) There were 2 fully equipped first aid boxes available at the premises and both were stored on a high shelf out of children's reach.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available on the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
  - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service were available on file. The last fire drill was carried out on 10 April 2024.
  - (b) Records regarding the number, service and type of fire equipment were maintained on file. The fire equipment had a maintenance serviced during November 2023 and the wired smoke alarm was serviced during April 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall near the entrance door to the care room.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

The services' insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of early years children covered which was 22, the start date, which was 28 November 2023, the end date, which was 27 November 2024, the category of service covered which was Montessori care and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding an additional session, public liability and fire and theft cover.