

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC354
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Name of Service:	Scamps and Rascals Pre-School
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Address of Service:	The Bridge Inn, Main Street, Ladysbridge, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P25 C2N8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Curtin
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	10/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Scamps and Rascals Pre-School is a part time service, that is registered to cater for children aged two to six years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is accommodated over 38 weeks of the year. The sessional services are facilitated on five mornings and four afternoons each week.

Situated in the village of Ladysbridge, in Co. Cork, the service is provided from the ground floor of a two storey premises. There is one operational care room, which includes a smaller interconnecting room. Sanitary facilities and a kitchen are available adjacent to the main care room and a designated outdoor play area is accessible beside the building.

Staffing

At present, the service employs four adults, all of whom work directly with the children who attend. This includes the registered provider and one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. A student was also undertaking a work placement at the time of inspection.

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 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

(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 designated person in charge of the service was the registered provider, who had also nominated a deputy, to deputise in her absence.
 - (b) The registered provider was present to facilitate the duration of the inspection process.
- (2) Recruitment records relating to the four adults employed at the early years service were assessed, along with those of a student.
- (a) There were eight written and validated references in place from past employers.
 - (b) None of the references had been provided by sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five adults. 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 available on file for one of the two staff members, who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer, as adults.
- (4) Three of the adults who worked directly with the children had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ). Copies of the corresponding certificates were either held on file, or were displayed at the setting. A qualification was not required for the student.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and validated references were unavailable in respect of one of the adults.
- (d) The required police vetting was unavailable for one of the staff members, who had resided in another jurisdiction as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was unavailable to demonstrate that one of the adults, who worked directly with the children, had attained a minimum level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b)
- The written reply from the registered provider stated that two references have since been validated by phone and recorded. As a preventive measure, the registered provider will ensure that two validated references are on file, prior to any future employee starting employment at the setting. It was also stated that the employee has since ceased employment at the service.
- (d)
- The police vetting was applied for and can take up to 20 working days. However, it is noted that the adult in question has ceased employment at the service. As a preventive measure, checklists will be in place for new staff members.
- (4)
- As the qualification held by the employee was not listed on the recognised qualifications, the adult in question has ceased employment. In future, the registered provider will check the DCEDIY website and will liaise with the County Childcare Committee, to ensure that all future staff members have a minimum level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)(a)(b) Two written and validated references in respect of the adult.
- (d) A screen shot regarding confirmation of the police vetting application.
- (4) The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9. As the adult in question is no longer employed at the service, the outstanding police vetting is not required.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) Between 10.03am and 12.15pm, the adult child ratios met the requirements of the regulation. During this time, 2 qualified adults were available to 16 children, who were aged 3 to 4 ½ years. In the afternoon, there were seven children, aged two and a half to three years, under the care and supervision of two adults. The student and a third staff member were not included in the adult child ratios.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) As one of the adults did not hold a minimum level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education, there was only one qualified staff member available to 16 children, until a second qualified staff member arrived shortly after 10.00am.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The written reply outlined that the registered provider has adjusted the staff roster with current and qualified staff, to ensure that two qualified staff members are working at all times. To prevent this from reoccurring in the future, the registered provider will ensure that the appropriate number of qualified adults are available to the children at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the staff roster.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)

(h) A five-week sample of the service's child attendance records was assessed for compliance. Arrival and departure times had been recorded for all children during this period.

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

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- The children's mid-morning snack was accommodated at 11.00am. During this time, the adults sat alongside the children and provided appropriate assistance. A relaxed environment was evident, which encouraged the children to socialise with their peers, as they enjoyed their snacks. It was also noted that children who required additional time for eating and drinking were kindly reassured to take their time.
- Drinking water was available to the children, should they become thirsty at any stage; their reusable water bottles were stored on a low-level shelf in the care room.

- Tissues were within the children’s reach throughout the morning, which promoted self-care skills.
- The children’s independence was supported when accessing and using the adjacent sanitary facilities. For example, adults were observed to verbally check in with children and reminded children to wash their hands.
- Children who sought a quiet, relaxing space could avail of the rest area, which was located in the interconnecting Green room.
- The layout of the main care room ensured that children had sufficient space to carry out their chosen activities. Outdoor play was accommodated during the morning.

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 entrance gate to the service was observed to be secured, when all of the children had arrived at the setting. The same gate formed part of the secure enclosure of the outdoor play area, along with the building walls and high-level fencing.
- Safe storage of cleaning agents was ensured.
- The surface temperatures of the electric radiators were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 50°C.
- A brightly coloured visibility strip was in place on the small step, between the care room and the hallway.
- Firefighting equipment was safely tethered.
- The first aid kit and was appropriately stored out of children’s reach.
- Suitable safety clips were in use to secure blind cords.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins. The children washed their hands after using the toilet and before beginning the mid-morning snack.
- Refrigerated storage was provided for the children’s perishable foods.
- Tables used for mealtimes were sanitised before and after use and the floor was swept after snack time.
- Labelled wall hooks were in use to store the children’s coats and bags.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication to a child was not observed.
- Further to this, the inspector was informed that none of the children were in receipt of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were noted to sleep during the inspection period.

Outing:

- An outing did not take place.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Warm running water, required for effective handwashing, was unavailable at both wash hand basins in the children's sanitary facility and at the wash hand basin in the staff sanitary facility. This was also found at the previous inspection on 8 September 2022. The subsequent CAPA response outlined that hot water would be available throughout the day, however, this was not found in practice.

Fire Safety:

2. One of the two signposted fire exit routes from the care room was obstructed. It was noted that the inner of two fire exit doors was key locked, with the key stored on an adjacent wall hook. While it was acknowledged that the door had been secured to prevent the unsupervised exit of a child, this may delay a timely exit in the event of a fire.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The written reply outlined that the availability of warm water was affected on the day in question due to a water outage in the area the week before. A plumber has since called to the service and has fixed this issue and the warm water is now working. In the event of future water outages, the registered provider will ensure that the water is checked by a plumber before the service reopens.

Fire Safety:

2. The key lock is no longer in operation on the door. A bolt lock is now in place. This can be easily opened by adults in a quick manner and is out of the children's reach. A door sensor alarm has also been installed. Locks that require keys will not be used going forward.

Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence.

Fire Safety:

2. A photograph of the door sensor alarm.

Summary Comment

Based on the statements and evidence submitted by the registered provider, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.

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) First Aid Response (FAR) certification was on file for one of the adults, who was available the setting throughout the hours of operation.
- (2)
- (a)&(b)
- The service's first aid box was safely stored in the main care room and was readily available at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a part time service. Up to 22 children were covered to attend at any one time and the policy was valid until 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

- (c)
- The main care room, adjoining Green room, hallway, kitchen and the children's sanitary facility were adequately lit. Windows allowed for natural light and artificial light was provided through LED ceiling lights, or fluorescent lights.
 - Electric heaters were in place at the setting. The air temperature of the main care room was recorded at 18.7°C.
 - Openable windows were available in the care room and in the children's sanitary facility. An air vent was provided in the staff sanitary facility.
- (d) A cleaning schedule and cleaning records were presented for review and were found to have been completed to date.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) The ceiling light in the staff sanitary facility was not functioning. It was noted that the globe lampshade had been removed from the ceiling and was stored on top of the toilet. The absence of functioning lighting in this area was also found at the previous inspection on 8 September 2022. The CAPA response that followed stated that the light had been repaired and would be checked daily. However, this remained an issue.

- (d)
1. In the staff sanitary facility, there were two wall tiles missing from the wall behind the wash hand basin. This issue was found at the previous inspection on 22 September 2022. In the subsequent CAPA reply, the registered provider outlined that the tiles would be checked daily for damage, however this failed to prevent the recurrence of the non-compliance.
 2. In the outdoor play area, one of the concrete slabs was broken and posed as a potential trip hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c) The electrician has called to the service and has fixed the light. The electrician was also asked to check this issue thoroughly, to prevent it from reoccurring. The registered provider will do a daily check on all lights, to prevent this from happening in the future.
- (d)
1. The wall tiles have been fixed to the wall securely. Checks will be conducted to ensure that the wall tiles are secure.
 2. The gap in the concrete has been covered safely. The registered provider will ensure that checks for gaps in concrete are carried out regularly.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c) Photographic evidence.

- (d)
1. A photograph of the replaced wall tiles.
 2. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider were accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.