

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE090

Name of Service: Little Scholars Pre-school

Address of Service: 17 Hillcrest, Roslevan, Tulla Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Eircode: V95 R001

Name of Registered Provider: Sandra Slattery

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 24/10/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Tusla Child and Family Agency
Primary Care Centre
Station Road
Ennis
County Clare.

Inspection undertaken by: A.McCarthy

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 Click or tap here to enter text.

Description of service

Little Scholars is a privately owned, sessional service located in an urban area, on the outskirts of Ennis, County Clare. A programme of care and education is provided Monday to Friday from 08:45 to 11:45 and from 12:00 to 15:00. The service is located in a single storey building in two rooms adjacent to the registered providers' home. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side and front of the premises.

Staffing

Four adults are employed by the service. On the 24 October 2024 the registered provider and three adults cared for the children in the morning and the registered provider, and two adults cared for the children in the afternoon.

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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19(1)(a), 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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.

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, 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 registered provider was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a person to deputise were available throughout the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available in respect of the registered provider and three adults working in service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Six written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Two written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for one adult who had lived in another state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 and Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 24 October, the ratio of adults supervising children was maintained in the adjoining care rooms. Four adults supervised nineteen children in the morning and three adults supervised ten children in the afternoon.

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)
The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to age and level of development of the children:

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, acknowledged the children by their individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults offered praise and encouragement. The children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the programme of care and education in each room. The transitions in the children's activities were completed with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably with their peers and the adults. The parents/guardians provided the children's food. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. The transitions in activities were completed in a calm manner and the children were notified in advance of these changes.

Physical and Material Environment:

Two rooms were in operation during the inspection. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities. The children were observed to be fully engaged as they transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment. The care rooms were bright, spacious and well-resourced and were laid out to enable the children to freely move and play. Numerical, alphabetical learning aids and creative work were displayed on the walls in each care room. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care rooms were appropriately resourced with nature tables, dress up areas, pretend kitchens, wooden playhouses and an area for the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children. The outdoor play area located to the side and rear of the service and was accessed by the children during the inspection. A large variety of ride on toy vehicles, scooters and tricycles, pretend playhouses, balls and basketball net.

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 was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured to protect the children within, and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in a record book.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured on the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Child friendly handwashing posters were located above the wash handbasins as prompters to promote good handwashing practices.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the service's medication administration policy.
- Documentation was available should medication be required.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exits routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- An outing was not conducted on the day of inspection. A policy was available to inform parents/guardians and the adults working in the service of the service procedure for conducting outings.

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)

One adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in the care room.

(b)

A first aid box was available in a central location in the room for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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 fire fighting 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 were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. A fire drill took place on the 07 October 2024.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system service took place on the 04 December 2023.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.