

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW024
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Name of Service:	Little Orchard
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Address of Service:	Leighlinbridge Community Childcare Centre, Leighlinbridge, Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 KN72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Thomas Lalor
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	15/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	68	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry. C Ryan.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors.

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

This full day care service is in Leighlinbridge village, 12 kilometres from Carlow town. A service is provided to children aged from 6 months to 6 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8.00am and 6.00pm (including an Early Years Care and Education Programme (ECCE) sessional service from 9.00am to 12.30pm). A registered school age service is also provided. The premises is a detached four storey building with seven early years rooms. There is an additional prefabricated classroom at the rear of the building, two designated sleep rooms, and a number of outdoor play areas for the use of the children attending the service.

Staffing

There were 19 staff on the premises on the day of inspection including the manager who also works directly with the children. All staff working directly with the early years children, held a major award in early childhood care and education at Level 5 and above 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 focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment

Regulation 10 Policies and Procedures

Regulation 11 Staffing levels

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child
 Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child
 Regulation 25 First aid
 Regulation 26 Fire Safety
 Regulation 28 Insurance

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 inspectors wish 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*
- (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.*
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*
- (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.*
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The childcare manager was the designated person in charge and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. There was a second named staff available to deputise as required.

The files for all staff members were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

There were two validated references available on file for all staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available on file in the service for all staff members.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for five staff members.

(4)

Certificate of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the early years children was available on file.

7)(a)

The manager had ensured that all staff were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and training to carry out their duties in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they had regular staff meetings where they were informed of developments in the service. Staff also communicated with each other and the manager using a mobile phone messaging application. There was evidence on file that staff had received training on manual handling, fire safety and training in relation to child protection

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 policies, procedures and statements as specified in Schedule 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 were available for inspection. For the purpose of this inspection the following policies were reviewed, and were found adequate and specific to the service:

- Policy on infection control.
- Policy on nappy changing.
- Policy on handwashing.
- Policy on accidents and incidents
- Policy on healthy eating.
- Policy on complaints.
- Policy on supporting positive behaviour.
- Policy on administration of medication.
- Policy on statement of purpose.
- Policy on sun safety
- Policy on key workers

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)
There was an adequate number of staff working with the children for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
During the morning, there were 68 children being directly cared for by 18 staff.
During the afternoon, there were 33 children being directly cared for by 6 staff.
The childcare manager was also present on the premises, and available to assist across the playrooms as needed during the day.

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*
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)
The manager ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities observed during the inspection

including eating together, playing in the outdoor areas, and enjoying planned activities in the early years rooms in the service. A system of observation stations was in operation in some of the early years rooms. This system involved staff writing their observations on the children's various activities and storing them in their named pouches. These observations were then stored in the children's learning journals which were later shared with the parents of the children. For example, one child under one was recorded as "having walked from the highchair to the bean bag today".

Children were encouraged to be independent, appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, in the little acorn room children aged from one to two years were encouraged to develop their motor skills. They enjoyed free movement throughout the room. There were baskets of toys suitable for them to develop their sensory interest through noise and touch. There was equipment in the room to allow the children to practice "pulling to stand" which they were observed to enjoy doing.

The staff and children sat together for their morning snack. The staff supervised the children with handwashing, and then they all sat together to eat. The atmosphere was relaxed, with staff and children chatting freely all morning. The staff supported children with transitions between activities by discussing what they were doing first and then. For example, "first we will tidy up after lunch, then we will do circle time". The children were familiar with their daily routines, with the children heard prompting staff that they needed sunscreen and hats before going outside. The children and staff were observed moving around the room and engaged in different activities and free play during the morning. The staff stated they set up activities at the tables as invitations to play for the children, allowing the play to be led by the children.

Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. Children were observed as they were brought down the stairs in the service. Children were wearing colour coded shirts. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this practice was to ensure they stayed with their group when going back to their respective early years rooms. Staff were observed to take care escorting the children down the stairs. Children were observed enjoying free play in the outdoor area. Staff were observed playing with the children in the outdoor area. Children who were not walking independently were observed by the inspectors being brought for a walk in the afternoon in a buggy that could hold up to six children. Staff were observed chatting to the children and pointing out various trees and flowers while they were brought for a walk.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were easily accessible to children. There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area such as a raised flower bed, an enclosed area with a covered sand pit, buddy benches for children to sit on, a seesaw and a mud kitchen. There were ride-on toys provided to facilitate gross motor play. There was a mixture of ground covering to facilitate all the ages and stages of the children attending the service. There was artificial grass in a fenced area in the corner of the large outdoor area. There was a concrete surface for the children to play on the ride on toys, and a large area which was covered in natural grass for the enjoyment of all the children.

1(b)

The manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Nutritious and varied food was offered to children at regular intervals throughout the day and extra portions were readily available. Dinner time was observed in the wacky willows room. Children were seated in comfortable and good quality chairs. Young children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development and were helped when needed. Children were served a freshly cooked dinner served from the onsite kitchen.

The dinner was made from chicken, potatoes, gravy and carrots. The food was in plentiful supply and many children were served extra portions when they asked for more. One child who did not like the dinner on the day of inspection was given an alternative which their parents had provided for them. Children had water to drink from their water bottles and cups. In the afternoon children were given a plate of freshly cut fruit, pots of yogurt and water to drink. Children who asked for extra portions were provided with them.

Children who wore nappies had them changed regularly throughout the day and at other times when required. Nappy changing was observed by the inspector. The nappy changing policy in the service was adhered to in all observations by the inspector. Staff were consistent in washing their hands before and after the procedure. They also washed the children's hands on each occasion their nappy was changed as per the services policy. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Bibs were put on younger children before eating and their hands and faces were cleaned afterwards.

Sleep routines were reflective of children’s individual needs. Staff in the baby room were observed to promptly pick up on cues for sleep given by the children in their care. Safe sleep practices were adhered to. The children’s position, colour and breathing were observed and recorded every 10 minutes. Staff in the baby room communicated with parents at collection and drop off. There was a system in place where the baby’s routine was documented in a mobile phone application which could be accessed by the parents of the children in attendance.

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:

Accident and incident record books were reviewed on the day and showed consistency across the rooms. The recording of any minor bumps or falls that occurred was in line with the services policy. Access to the service was gained through the front door by ringing a bell. Staff were required to see the person through the door prior to allowing them access to the service. The openings of the windows were restricted with appropriate restrictive opening devices. The fire doors were not obstructed. The main stairway was well lit. There were two banisters in place for the safety of staff and children. The outdoor areas were observed to be safe, suitable and secure.

The staff were observed carrying out a fire drill in the service as the inspectors were arriving in the building. The information on the fire drill was shared with parents by displaying a notice on the front door letting parents know how many children were evacuated during the fire drill and how long it took to complete.

Infection Control:

Handwashing procedures observed were consistent. Warm water, liquid soap and hand towels were freely available. Attention to children’s personal hygiene was attended to, with staff observed prompting children to wipe their noses and wash their hands. Tissues were freely available in the rooms.

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)

There were staff trained in first aid available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the premises and was available for use.

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)

Monthly fire drills were completed in the service. A fire drill was carried out on the morning of the inspection on the 15 May 2023.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment was serviced. The last maintenance carried out in the service was recorded as having taken place in November 2022 and April 2023.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that adequate insurance was in place.