

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR058		
Name of Service:	Little Willows Academy		
Address of Service:	24 Willow Rd, Wyckham Park, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D16KC86		
Name of Registered Provider:	Pauline Kelly		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time		
Date of Inspection:	03/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM 29
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Fiona Carty		
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		

Description of service

Little Willows Academy is a privately owned full day care service and is one of three services operated by the registered provider in South Co Dublin. The service is located in an urban, residential area of Dundrum. Care and education are provided to children aged between 1 and 6 years and the service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:45 and 17:30 hours. Little Willows Academy is a purposely adapted, two storey commercial property and comprises of four care rooms and a dedicated sleep room. The children have access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs ten adults who work directly with the children, including the designated person in charge. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. On the day on inspection nine staff members were present.

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/ information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 29 and 30. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 children, staff and person in charge who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) Documentation was assessed under Regulation 9 for all ten adults currently employed to work in the service.

The following records were available for the adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from two sources for eight of the adults. One verified reference was available for one other adult.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau for the ten adults.

(d) International police vetting was available for four of the adults who had all lived outside the state for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) There was evidence that nine of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b)
A second reference available for one of the adults had not been appropriately verified.
- (4)
The was no evidence available to show that one of the adults had had attained at least a full major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The named person in charge provided the following response;

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b) A second validated reference has been provided for the staff member. No preventive action was submitted.
- (4) The staff member has ceased employment in the service. Going forward the service stated they will do their best to hire staff who all have a fully completed certificate on hand.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the person in charge and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were thirty-four children present in the service being supervised by eight adults during the inspection. The designated person in charge provided relief cover as required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 10 records were reviewed by the inspectors.

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a), (b), (c), (d), (f), (g), and (i) of the above Regulation for all of the records reviewed.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (e) The registered provider did not ensure that a record in writing was available detailing the persons who were authorised to collect the child in two of the records reviewed.
 - (h) There were no record of immunisations available for one of the records reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The named person in charge provided the following response;

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(e)(h) The incomplete record forms have now all been completed by the parents. On a child starting the service will go through the forms more thoroughly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated will address the non-compliance. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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-

(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

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff reported that the service provided breakfast and a hot meal to the children. Snacks are provided daily by the parents of the children in attendance. Drinking water was available in the care rooms at all times and offered to the children regularly. All children were supported to eat independently during meals, and staff assisted children where required. Bibs were worn in the younger care rooms to protect the children's clothes from becoming soiled when eating.

The play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led. The children were all provided with the opportunity to play outdoors during the inspection. Older children were observed using the toilet independently and younger children wearing nappies were changed regularly and when required. Staff demonstrated kindness and affection during interactions observed by the inspectors. Staff provided comfort to children promptly when required and children appeared happy and content throughout the inspection.

Staff tended to children's personal care needs and supported the children to wash their hands and clean their faces at appropriate times throughout the inspection. Older children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after their lunch on low level beds, and cots within the dedicated sleep room.

Younger babies were placed to sleep in line with their individual routines. Staff provided comfort to the children when they were settling them to sleep, using soft tones and offering reassurance where required. Rest areas were available for children to relax or take time away from the group if required.

Non-Compliance Information

Some practices were observed which were not suitable or appropriate and negatively affected the well-being of some children present follows:

- One staff member was observed to take four children into the nappy changing room to change nappies. There was not enough space available and the children were unable to move freely in the room. During this time, one child became distressed and began to cry. The staff member attempted to comfort the child and commented there were too many people in the room. The nappy room was 1.09 metres squared.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The named person in charge provided the following response;

Corrective and Preventive Action

The team were informed immediately after inspection about the number of children that should be brought together, the team also discussed the importance of assessing situations and using initiative when children become distressed. The team have been informed that only 2 children from downstairs can be brought upstairs at a time to the changing room. Upstairs classes will only bring one at a time.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environments were safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and placed babies on their backs to sleep. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated sleep room and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour and position every ten minutes. Standard cots were provided for children under two years to sleep and low-level beds were provided for children over two years to rest as required.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Some practices were observed in the service were at variance with the infection control policies in place and posed a potential risk of cross contamination as follows:

1. During nappy changing, a staff member was observed to re-dress a child and clean the nappy changing mat wearing the soiled gloves used for nappy changing.
2. The shared mattresses in use in the cot room did not have a waterproof covering to allow for effective cleaning between uses where required. Four of the coverings were soiled and stained.
3. The couch in the children's rest area of the Toddler room was torn and internal padding was exposed meaning it could not be effectively cleaned.
4. There was no handwashing observed in the Wobbler or the Toddler rooms before mealtimes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The named person in charge provided the following response;

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Nappy changing procedure has been done once again with that member of staff.
2. Each child supplies the service with a mattress protector, so they have no direct contact with the stained mattress. We can make sure they are waterproof.
3. The tear in the sofa has been taped.
4. Hand washing procedure has been once again discussed with both the wobbler and toddler rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective action provided under point 2 does not address the non-compliance. As no supporting documentation was submitted, the inspectorate cannot be assured that the non-compliances identified have been appropriately addressed. The regulatory requirement has not been met.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Non-Compliance Information

Regulation 29 (e) was reviewed to assess compliance following the last inspection of the service on the 13th September 2022.

There was only one nappy changing station available for 17 children requiring nappy changing in the service. Although there was a second nappy changing mat available in the changing room it was not in use as there was not enough space between the two mats for staff members to stand and change two children.

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following the last inspections of the service in 2022 and 2021 did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliance. The person in charge stated that the service is still seeking to resolve the issue and add a second changing area, but to date no solution has been found.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The named person in charge provided the following response;

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service have been trying hard to find additional space with in the service to create a larger changing facility. The plan made with an external professional will be this: the hot press which is located next to the upstairs changing room will be knocked out to create a bigger space for changing. This work can only be done during closer period and the next closure period we have is Easter week. The service are confident that by doing this will create adequate space for two changing mats and changes done at the same time. This work will be done over the easter break when the service closes for a week.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions outlined as stated will address the non-compliance. As the works are yet to be completed, the regulatory requirement has not been met. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

Regulation 30 (2) was assessed as a result of an outstanding non-compliance following the last inspection of the service on the 13th September 2022. The minimum clear floor space was available in the Toddler room on the day of inspection.