

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR059		
Name of Service:	Little Dale Academy		
Address of Service:	19-21 Dale Road, Kilmacud, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	A94 K8W7		
Name of Registered Provider:	Pauline Kelly		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	31/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM 57
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and M. Redmond		
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 Dale Academy provides a full-day, part-time and sessional early years service to children aged 0-6 years. It operates from a two-storey, purposely adapted building in an urban area. Children are allocated to one of seven pre-school rooms according to their age. A separate sleep room is available on each floor and an outdoor area is available at the rear. The service opens Monday to Friday from 8am to 5:30pm.

Staffing

There are 23 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider, person in charge, administrative and maintenance staff. Nineteen staff are employed to work directly with the children.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspections 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 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*

(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

The inspection focused on the recruitment records of persons who had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection dated 20 July 2022 for regulations 9(2)(a), (b), (d) and (4). Ten staff members and three students had started working in the service since that date. The inspection focused on the records for all adults under regulation 9(2)(c).

- (2)
- (a) Records were available evidencing past employer references had been considered for all persons.
- (b) Records were available evidencing sources other than a past employer had been considered for all persons who had no or only one previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults.
- (d) International police vetting was available for all persons who had lived outside the state for more than six months.
- (4) Records were available evidencing nine out of ten staff employed to work directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) It was not evidenced that one staff member employed to work directly with children held the required qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member went on leave following the inspection. The service will await confirmation that the qualification is recognised before she returns to work. Management will ensure that all persons applying for a position within the service have the required qualification or they will not be employed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of application to Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to assess whether the staff member's qualification is equivalent to a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to address the non-compliance.

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 adults available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provider for an adequate number of adults to be available to the children at all times.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained. Seventeen adults were allocated to work with sixty-two children.

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

Inspectors observed children moving freely and exploring their environment. Staff applied sunscreen to the children before taking them outside appropriate to the weather. Children were provided with food and snacks at regular intervals. Drinks of water were offered with meals and snacks and were always available to the children. Children sat in small groups with adults at mealtimes. The adults engaged the children in conversation and provided help when needed. Bibs were provided for younger children to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet.

Children were encouraged and supported to manage their personal care. They were supported to clean their hands and faces after eating. They used the toilet as needed with staff available to help. Children who wore nappies had these changed at scheduled times and in between when needed.

Children were provided with the opportunity to rest or sleep on low beds or cots appropriate to their age and stage of development. Babies were placed to sleep according to their individual routine or when they displayed signs of tiredness. Transitions to sleep were managed smoothly and the children appeared calm and content. Lighting was dimmed and soft music was played. Children who used soothers for comfort were given these at this time. Staff remained with the children providing reassurance while they settled to sleep.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children through use of soft and gentle tones. Children were promptly comforted when they became upset. A daily diary was shared with parents/guardians in real time to communicate about their child's day in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The inspector observed a child who was aged 19 months was not provided with an opportunity to develop their independence skills at mealtime. The adult fed the child, holding the bowl and spoon out of reach despite the child displaying signs of wanting to self-feed including reaching for the spoon. This was observed on the previous inspection. The actions submitted had not been effective in preventing the recurrence.

2. The inspector observed a child in the Wobbler room being rushed at mealtime when the children were being placed to sleep. The child appeared to be feeding themselves contentedly. The adult intervened and made attempts to feed the child with another spoon. When the child refused, the adult stood over the child waiting for them to finish. Although the child was scraping the empty bowl at the end of the meal they were not offered any more and were promptly brought to the sleep room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. & 2. Training was carried out following the inspection regarding mealtimes including self-feeding and providing ample time to eat. Management have carried out spot checks to ensure these measures have been put in place. Regular spot checks and recaps during staff meetings will be carried out to ensure everyone understands the importance of promoting positive mealtime experiences.

Supporting documentation submitted

E-mail confirming service commencement with Better Start Quality Development Service.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances. The practices will be assessed on the next inspection.

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

Inspectors observed the following examples of measures taken to provide for the children's safety:

General Safety:

- Entrances/exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child leaving unsupervised.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Cables and blind cords were secured out of reach of children.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.
- Children's attendance was recorded accurately for reference in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Infection Control:

- Children's hands were washed after using the toilet to prevent the spread of infection.
- The Pre-school rooms and sanitary facilities were observed to be in a clean condition.
- Sanitary facilities were equipped with liquid soap and paper towels for handwashing.
- Pedal operated, lidded bins were available for the safe disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of safety procedures to take when giving medicine to children, including obtaining written parent/guardian consent.
- Medicines were stored appropriately in their original packaging, out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were placed to sleep in appropriate facilities including standard cots and low-level beds according to their age and stage of development.
- Inspectors observed staff checking sleeping children at 10-minute intervals and maintaining a record of the checks.
- Appropriate bedding was used to prevent overheating.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An emergency exit leading from the Baby room was blocked from opening by an outdoor gate which was partially extending in front of the door. This posed a risk to the timely evacuation of children in the event of an emergency.
2. The temperature of the water at the children's wash-hand basins on the ground floor was not maintained below 43°C to prevent scalding. The temperature was recorded at 49.9°C.

Infection Control:

3. Appropriate procedures for preventing the spread of infection when changing children's nappies were not followed. Inspectors observed staff changing children's nappies without washing their own or the children's hands afterwards. Staff were observed re-dressing children and cleaning the changing mat while wearing gloves that were used to change children's nappies.
4. Sanitising gel was used on children's hands in the Toddler room before eating instead of handwashing contrary to infection control guidelines.

Administration of Medication:

5. It was not evident that parents/guardians were always informed when medication had been given to a child to provide for their continuation of care. Seventeen medicine records were reviewed. Six records did not have a parent/guardian signature recorded to indicate they had been informed.

Safe Sleep:

6. The temperature of the cot room on the ground floor was not maintained between 16-20°C when children were sleeping to prevent overheating. Inspectors recorded the temperature at 21.8°C over a two-hour period. The temperature did not fall below this despite staff attempts to cool the room by opening the window and turning on a fan.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The gate has been reversed to open inwards ensuring there are no obstructions to the emergency exit. Regular checks will be carried out to ensure no emergency exits are obstructed.
2. The thermostat dial has been lowered to 43°C. The water temperature will be checked prior to opening each morning.

Infection Control:

3. Training was carried out immediately following the inspection regarding the correct nappy changing procedure. All staff were observed changing a nappy by management to ensure the procedure was carried out correctly. All staff were provided with a copy of the protocol which was located from the Tusla website. Training will re-occur on 17 and 18 July. Regular checks will be carried out as well as recaps at staff meetings.
4. Training was carried out regarding the importance of handwashing before mealtimes. A sink was installed in the Toddler room to ensure handwashing occurs before meals. Training will be carried out at staff meetings and regular spot checks will be undertaken.

Administration of Medication:

5. All medicine forms have been checked for signatures and updated as required. Staff have been instructed on the importance of obtaining signatures on collection. Daily follow-ups will be carried out by management as management are responsible for the administration. Weekly checks are being carried out on all medicine forms.

Safe Sleep:

6. An air conditioning unit has been installed in the cot room to maintain the temperature between 16-20°C. Temperatures will be recorded daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted documents and photographs in keeping with the actions stated.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances. Practices will be assessed on the next inspection.

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

Compliance Information

The temperatures of the children's base rooms and sanitary facilities were measured as these had been recorded as low on the previous inspection. Inspectors observed the temperatures to be appropriately maintained between 18 and 22°C.