

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(s) of Inspection:	18/06/2024
Date 2 of Inspection:	19/06/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	61	PM	61
Day 2	AM	60	PM	60

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7 th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern & S. Quigley
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 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 five 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 21 staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider, person in charge, administrative and culinary staff. Seventeen 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 19(1)(b) - Health, Welfare and Development of Child and 23 – Safety. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler, Wobbler, Playgroup and Junior Montessori rooms.

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 registered provider, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
- (b) The deputy person in charge was always on the premises during the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or a named deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(2)

- (a) & (b) Appropriate consideration had been given to the references of all adults. Each adult had a minimum of two references available. These were provided from past employers and from other sources where the staff member had only one or no previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults and were dated within the last three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for all adults whom this was required.

(4) All adults working directly with children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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 with the children. There were 14 adults working directly with 61 children on day 1 and 62 children on day 2.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was always maintained. The staff roster provided for the minimum ratio to be met on a daily basis.

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

(1)(b) Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Meals and snacks were offered to the children regularly throughout the day. Drinks of water were available within the rooms and were offered when children were eating. The staff supported the children in managing their personal care. They provided younger children with bibs to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating. Children's nappies were changed routinely and as needed, with staff using these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions. Older children

were supported to use the toilet independently. Staff assisted the children with handwashing at appropriate times and helped them clean their faces after eating.

An area with matting and cushions was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. The children were given the opportunity to sleep after lunch. Staff stated that they also accommodate children to sleep if they show signs of tiredness outside of the designated sleep time. The children were made comfortable for sleep, with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff sitting with the children and soothing them as needed. A record was kept for staff to communicate with parents/guardians regarding the individual children's care, including information about diet, sleep, and nappy changes.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Medicines were kept out of children's reach, and emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire. Staff demonstrated a good understanding of fire safety measures, including regular fire drills and maintaining attendance records for each child on the premises.

Infection Control:

Measures were taken to reduce the risk of infection spreading. The Toddler, Playgroup and Junior Montessori rooms appeared clean and well maintained; soothers were stored in individual containers; sterilizing equipment was available for use as needed; individual bed linen was provided; cleaning schedules were in place which included the weekly laundering of bed linen.

Staff washed their own and children's hands after nappy changing; they took appropriate measures to prevent cross contamination during nappy changes including using gloves and cleaning the changing mat between children.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an understanding of procedures to follow to safeguard children when giving medicine. This included obtaining written parent/guardian consent; having a second staff member present as a witness; making a record and sharing the record with the child's parent/guardian on collection.

Safe Sleep:

Measures were taken to safeguard children when sleeping. The children slept in cots appropriate to their age and stage of development; procedures to reduce the risk of sudden infant death syndrome (SIDS) were displayed in the cot room; staff demonstrated a good understanding of these including maintaining the room temperature between 16 and 20°C; using appropriate bed linen to prevent overheating; checking children at ten-minute intervals and making a record of the checks.

Outing:

The registered provider and staff stated that the children are not taken on outings from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A bottle of cleaning fluid was stored in reach of children in the Wobbler room posing a risk of injury if accessed by a child.
2. A tall, heavy, shelving unit observed in an area where children pass regularly to go to the outdoor area was not secured, posing a risk of tipping and injury.

Infection Control:

3. Handwashing practices were at variance with infection control procedures required to prevent the spread of infection. In the Wobbler room, soapy water was applied to children's hands and wiped off with cotton wool, while Junior Montessori children were provided with sanitiser instead of handwashing.
4. The Wobbler room had not been cleaned to an adequate standard, posing an increased risk of infections to the children. Specifically, seating, high chairs, and the window sill were observed to have accumulated debris and dust.

5. Waste was not appropriately managed in the outdoor area to reduce the risk of infection spreading. The external bin for nappies was stored in an area where the children played. The bin used to dispose tissues after cleaning children's noses was not lidded or pedal operated.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A basket for all cleaning supplies has been placed on the shelf in the Wobbler room and all cleaning materials must be kept in this box and out of reach of children. Safety checks are regularly carried out to ensure all cleaning apparatus is out of reach and stored correctly.
2. The shelving unit in the area leading to the garden has been fixed to the wall.

Infection Control:

3. All children are brought to the bathroom after garden time and before each meal. A meeting was held directly after the inspection with both the Montessori class and the Wobbler room to discuss the handwashing procedures/cleaning protocols. Handwashing is a requirement, and all classes are reminded of this weekly and checks are currently being carried out to ensure this is happening.
4. A deep clean of the Wobbler room has been carried out and this room will be inspected daily by management. Management have demonstrated the importance of cleaning thoroughly and how to clean thoroughly. The service has updated the end of day check lists, and an evening check is carried out by management.
5. The bins have been removed from the garden and replaced with a foot pedal bin for disposing of tissues. The waste bins are stored in a locked pen within the garden area which is inaccessible to children. Management have put in place a garden waste check which is carried out by a designated member of the team each day.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

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Infection Control:

Supporting documents were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed to adequately address the non-compliances.