

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR139		
Name of Service:	Lakelands Childcare		
Address of Service:	9 Lakelands Road, Upper Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	A94 HK38		
Name of Registered Provider:	Vivienne Walsh , Ceinwen Walsh		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	25/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM 34
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		
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	Not applicable		

Description of service

Lakelands Childcare is one of two early years services operated by the registered providers. It operates from a two-storey, purposely adapted commercial building situated in a residential area. Children are allocated to one of four rooms according to their age and stage of development. There is an outdoor area at the rear of the premises and a separate sleep room for children attending the Baby room. The service offers full-day care for children up to six years of age between 8am and 6pm.

Staffing

There are 17 staff employed to work in the service including the registered providers, two cooks and a relief staff member. The service is managed by the registered providers who also work directly with the children when required. There were 9 staff members working directly with the children on the day of inspection with one of the registered providers available to assist as needed. An adult student was also present on a four-week work experience placement.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19(1)(b). As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Playschool room.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or named deputy to be present at all times of opening.
- (2)
- (a) Appropriate consideration was given to the past employer references of all staff.
 - (b) References from a reputable source were considered for staff who only had one or no previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The registered provider had applied to renew the Garda vetting disclosures for all staff that had been vetted prior to 25 April 2021.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for all adults whom this was required.
- (4) Fifteen staff members were employed to work directly with the children. Fourteen of the staff members held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) & (b) The registered provider did not source references for an adult student who was present on a four-week work placement.
- (4) It was not evident that one adult employed to work directly with the children held the minimum required qualification. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 2 October 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) & (b) Management have added to the pre-employment checklist that information must be gathered (the same as staff) prior to students attending placement. No student will be allowed to train/attend placement unless all paperwork is submitted. The student was due to leave the day after inspection. In future the pre-employment checklist will be used for all students, prior to placement.

(4) The same staff member is making efforts to get her qualification recognised in Ireland by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). Management will continue to ensure that any future staff will only be employed if they have qualifications recognized by DCEDIY.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Student policy
- Recruitment policy
- Pre-employment checklist

Summary Comment

(2)(a) & (b) The actions submitted have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.

(4) The regulatory requirement remains outstanding for one staff member.

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 children. There were nine staff members working directly with 34 children. The registered provider was available to provide break cover and assist as needed.

(2) The minimum ratio requirement of adults to children was always maintained.

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 inspector observed appropriate and suitable care practices. A key-worker system was in place to support the development of secure attachments. Staff demonstrated knowledge of the children in their care including their individual needs, developmental stages, likes and dislikes. Meals and snacks were offered at regular intervals. Drinks of water were always available and were offered when children were eating. The staff supported the children to manage their personal care; they ensured the children were dressed in coats appropriate to the weather when playing outside; they assisted the children with handwashing at appropriate times; they changed the children's nappies when required and were supportive with children's toilet training.

An area was provided with matting and cushions where the children could rest or take a break from activities. The children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after dinner. They were made comfortable with staff helping to remove the children's shoes and placing breathable blankets over them. The staff provided soothers to those who used them. A staff member sat with the children and supported them to settle to sleep.

The staff showed warmth and affection in their interactions with the children through use of soft and gentle tones. They promptly comforted the children when they became upset. Staff spoke of meetings they had with children's parents and communicated with parents/guardians regarding the child's day using an app.