

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR152		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Park Academy Childcare Thornwood		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Lapwing, Thornwood, Booterstown, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A94 C1P1		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	08/09/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R. Duff		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

This childcare service is located in an urban area of South County Dublin. It is registered to provide full day care, part time and sessional care to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is registered to open on Monday to Friday between 8:00am and 6:30pm. On the day of inspection, sessional care was offered to children from 9am-12pm. Care is provided in one large room which can be divided into two by the use of a full length folding divider.

### Staffing

The service currently employs five adults including the person in charge and an adult to carry out domestic duties. The registered provider does not work in the service. The person in charge does not work directly with the children but is available for support when needed. There were three adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The regional manager arrived to the service during the inspection but did not 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, information and records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(a-b)(2)(a-d) (4) Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child.

Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the regional manager, 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.

(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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- The inspection included a review of the required documentation for three adults employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 23 June 2022. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the five adults employed in the service. The following documentation was available;
- (a)(b) Of the six written and validated references that were required, six were available from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for five adults employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures from all adults were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Garda vetting which was dated within the last three years was available for five adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who were employed to work in the service since the last inspection on 23 June 2022 as they had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that two adults who were employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection on 23 June 2022 held the required qualification.

### 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 at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day services was adhered to at all times during the inspection.

There were 13 children attending the service being supervised by 3 adults on the day of inspection.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*  
*(c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of children's records were reviewed by the inspector in respect of 10 children currently enrolled to attend the service. The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of the details relating to points (a), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i) of the above regulation for each of the records reviewed.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

### Non-Compliance Information

(b) Two of the records reviewed did not contain details of the date on which the child first attended the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that the start date was added to the children's file following the inspection. A monthly audit will be carried out on children's files to ensure all information is correct.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance.

## 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 care practices in place. The children moved freely in the care room— exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtime. Children brought snacks from home. Drinks were readily available within the care room. Mealtime was a social occasion with children and adults sitting together, staff provided children with help when needed.

Child sized tables and chairs allowed the children to eat and engage in tabletop activities. There was evidence that equipment and materials provided were based on the children's individual needs and emergent interests. Toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving units and accessible to children. The care room also had child sizes sofa, cushions and floor mats to facilitate rest or provide a place for children to take a break from activities. During the morning session, children had the opportunity to take part in an artwork project with a staff member,

alternative activities were also available. Children were encouraged to clean up after themselves throughout the morning and were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times. Children used the toilet independently but were offered support when needed.

Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and were dressed appropriate to the weather.

Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child's day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. On the day of inspection transitions from preschool to home were observed to be friendly and informative to parents or guardians collecting children.

### 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:

- When the inspector arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, and pedal operated bins.
- The children and staff members washed their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection

##### Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection.
- Staff were aware of children's food allergies and adequately described how allergies are managed in the service. Care plans were available for children who required regular or emergency medication.

##### Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. Throughout the outdoor area, the safety surface was observed to be loose and lifting, the edges were also raised creating a trip hazard for children and staff.
2. In the outdoor area, under the slide, a section of the safety surface was observed to be missing. This created a trip hazard for children.
3. In the outdoor area, the edges of the wooden play equipment in the sand play area were observed to be sharp and uneven. This created a potential risk of injury for children.
4. In the children's care room, two electrical cable was observed trailing onto the floor close to the fire exit. These cables were in reach of children during the inspection; this poses a potential risk of injury to a child.

#### Infection Control:

5. In the children's care room, the cushions in the cosy area were heavily stained and required cleaning. Children were observed sitting and lying on the cushions throughout the inspection. This poses a risk of cross contamination to children.
6. In the children's care room, the cushions on the 2 children's lounge chairs were heavily stained and required cleaning. Children were observed sitting on the chairs throughout the inspection. This poses a risk of cross contamination to children.
7. In the children's care room, the cover on a beanbag used by the children was observed to be heavily stained and requiring cleaning. This poses a risk of cross contamination to children.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The registered provider has stated:

1. The edging that can be secured is in process of being done and made safe. It is marked out of bounds to the children until the interim repair has been completed so the risk has been minimised, and the garden is safe to use. A new garden surface is being costed for 2026
2. The area under the slide was cordoned off and is now covered by a sand pit to minimise the risk of tripping.
3. The edges in the sand play area have since been sanded down by the Maintenance team and risk assessments are carried out daily in the garden, hazards are reported to the Manager to be actioned.

- One of the cables has been removed from the room and the second cable has been tacked up on to the wall. Daily checklists are carried out to ensure all wires are securely tacked to walls and out of reach of the children.

### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

#### **Infection Control:**

The registered provider has stated:

- The cushions in the cosy area have been removed and replaced with new ones; the manager will ensure to replenish soft furnishings on a regular basis. A managers check list will include checking soft furnishings.
- Two new lounge seats have been purchased with additional covers; the manager will ensure to replenish soft furnishings on a regular basis. A managers check list will include checking soft furnishings.
- A new beanbag has been ordered; the manager will ensure to replenish soft furnishings on a regular basis. A managers check list will include checking soft furnishings.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **General Safety:**

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

#### **Infection Control:**

Supporting documentation has been submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### **Compliance Information**

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 45 children and an expiry date of 30 April 2026.