

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR172				
Name of Service:	Little Star Preschool				
Address of Service:	Tullow Church Hall, Brighton Road, Foxrock, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	D18 RF79				
Name of Registered Provider:	Lynda Priestley				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	13/01/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>21</td> <td>PM</td> <td>0</td> </tr> </table>	AM	21	PM	0
AM	21	PM	0		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Brunel building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F				
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Mayock and A. Byrne.				
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Regulation manager.				

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
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Description of service

This privately operated service was established by the current registered provider in 1998. Early childhood care and education is provided for children aged two and a half years to six years of age. The service operates from 09:00hrs – 12:30hrs Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service is located in a large hall within the grounds of Tullow Church in a residential area of south county Dublin. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area on the premises.

Staffing

The service employs four staff including the registered provider. The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and works 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 area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety, The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 (2)(4) Management and Recruitment.

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, staff and children 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,

(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) A sample of documentation was reviewed in respect of three adults who had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 14 June 2021. Regulation 9 (2)(c) was assessed for each of the four adults working in the service.

The following records were available for the three adults:

- (a) Of the six references required six were written and validated from a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for four adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years in relation to one staff member. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) International Police vetting was available for one adult who required it.

(4) Three adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring their lunch from home. Children's drinking water was always available to them. Children were observed enjoying healthy snacks including sandwiches, crackers, fruit and vegetables. Staff were observed to sit with the children for snack time to support children who needed assistance with their lunch and engage in conversations.

The children were supported to be self-caring and independent suitable to their age and stage of development. For example, washing their hands before snack, taking their own lunches and drinks to sit at the table for snack time, cleaning up after play and using the toilet independently.

The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed. Staff demonstrated good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play.

Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. Staff were observed supporting one child who were new to the service. The room was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. The materials were observed to be accessible to the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Designated areas of interest including mark making stations, small world toys, construction toys and a rest area with books were laid out. Low level tables and chairs were available. Family display walls and topics of interest were displayed on a portable display unit brought into the hall every day for circle time conversations. The children's artwork and photos were displayed throughout the hall. There was a secure storage area for the equipment at the end of the session which also provided for a rotation of materials and equipment frequently.

A fully enclosed outdoor area was located to the front of the premises and had a mix of bark, grass and other natural elements. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. On the day of inspection, the children were not observed to use the outdoor area due to the recent weather conditions. However, the children were offered the opportunity to engage in physical activities in the hall such as obstacle courses and games.

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:

- The entrance door to 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.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to the children and any doors out of the hall were secured with a key hung up out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of the inspection appeared in good working order.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Children were appropriately supervised to ensure that hand washing was effective for infection control purposes.
- A portable sink was available for use by the children when in the outdoor area.
- A cleaning schedule was in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials were regularly cleaned.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. One staff member working in the service did not have a Garda Vetting disclosure which was dated within the last 3 years.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

All staff have been informed that garda vetting needs to be renewed every three years. An updated policy has been implemented with notice of renewal of garda vetting and an updated staff file checklist was issued to ensure this occurs.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and

(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1)

A person trained in first aid responder was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A First aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on 4 December 2024.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was dated 20 August 2024.