

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR182
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Name of Service:	St. Michael's College Pre-School
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Address of Service:	St. Michael's College Junior School, Ailesbury Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D04 A373
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorna Heslin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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
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Description of service

St. Michael's College Pre-school is a full day care service which provides care to boys aged 3 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 08:00 to 15:00, Monday to Friday.

The service is located in the grounds of St. Michael's College Junior School in south Dublin and operates from a single, ground floor classroom within the school. Children have access to a secure outdoor play area on the roof of the building and use of the sports fields and grounds of St. Michael's College.

Staffing

The service currently employs 3 staff including a manager. There were 3 staff working directly with the children on the first day of inspection. The registered provider is the principal of the junior school and does 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 area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(1)(k) - Record in relation to Pre-school service.

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, 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

(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) No new staff members had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 19 November 2020. The files of three adults were reviewed as part of this inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) Of the six references that were required, four were available from a past employer and two were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the three staff members.

(d) Police vetting was required and was available for one staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that the three staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

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 care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised by three adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(h) Details of the attendance of each child were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(k) A sample of eight accident and incidents records were available and were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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

(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)(a)(b)

The manager reported that children bring in their own snacks and that dinner is provided by the service. Meals were provided at regular intervals. A morning snack was provided at 10:20. The main meal, which was provided by an external catering company, was served to the children at 12:30 and an afternoon snack was provided at 14:15. Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were observed taking their own lunches and drinks from their bags. Staff sat with children during their meals. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers during their meals and staff supported children who needed assistance with their meals.

Additional servings of dinner were available and were provided to children who requested more. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their meals and play.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. The service had a key person system in place and staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

Transitions within the service were managed with the use of a bell to notify children of an upcoming change and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Staff described how they record information about the children's activities using an online application which parents' access.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection.

The care room was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included mark making stations and arts and crafts materials, small world toys, construction toys, a rest area with books, a nature table and a home corner. The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and was adequately resourced with a variety of materials. The materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care room. The children's artwork was displayed throughout the care room.

Fully enclosed playing pitches were located to the rear of the premises and had an artificial grass surface. Children were observed playing ball games and staff were observed engaging children in gross motor movement games while in the outdoor area.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured with a keypad to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.
- Hand sanitisers, medicines and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before meals.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

Administration of Medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy in place. Practices in line with this policy were observed on the day of inspection. There were documented care plans available for three children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff aware of the treatment plans and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

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 was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of 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.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 11 September 2023.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that firefighting equipment had been serviced on 13 July 2023 and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 01 September 2023.
 - (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.