

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS098
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Name of Service:	Starlight Preschool
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Address of Service:	Tymon Bawn Community Centre, Church Grove, Aylesbury, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Síle Quinn
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	13
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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:	S Early O'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	Click or tap here to enter text.
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Description of service

Starlight Preschool is a privately operated service offering the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme to children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 6 years. The service currently provides a morning and afternoon session between the hours of 8:30am and 15:00pm. The service operates from a room on the ground floor of a community centre located in a residential area of Aylesbury, Tallaght. There are sanitary facilities adjacent to the room and a designated outdoor area at the rear of the building. There are two other early years services operating from the centre.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were three staff members including the registered provider present and working directly with the children, in addition to one student.

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 wellbeing 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/ records/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) Management and Recruitment

11 (1)(3)(8)(a) Staffing Levels

15 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) Record of a Pre-School Child

19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child

23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

25 First Aid

26 (1)(4) Fire Safety Measures

28 Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, Record of a Pre-School Child.

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 registered provider is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 09:50 on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and a review of five staff files it was confirmed that one new member of staff commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 16 February 2022. The student present on the day of inspection was completing a three-week placement programme.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a)(b) Of the four written and validated references required for the staff member employed since the last inspection and the student present on the day of inspection, two validated references were available from a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. 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. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were not required as there was no evidence to suggest that any of the adults working in the service had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months as an adult.

(4)
All adults employed in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two validated, written references were unavailable for one adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has advised that they have printed, validated and filed both references for the relevant adult. To prevent a reoccurrence of this non-compliance in the future, the registered provider has created an annual review date for all staff files.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of both validated references have been submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) has been adequately addressed.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore 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.

(3)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the inspection. There were 21 children attending the service being supervised by 3 adults on the morning of inspection and 13 children being cared for by 3 adults on the afternoon of inspection. The student onsite on the day of inspection was supernumerary.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Twelve children's records were sampled and reviewed. The records contained the required information as set out in Regulation 15 (1)(a) to (i).

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

Basic Needs

Heathy eating is promoted in the service and children bring their own lunch from home for snack time in the ECCE session. Water was available to the children from their own bottles which they had access to.

The service promotes rolling snack time, whereby children can decide for themselves when to eat. On the day of inspection, children were observed to take their lunchbox from the fridge and were encouraged to open and close lunch boxes and bottles and be responsible for their own belongings. Snack time was a social experience during which time the staff members interacted with and engaged in social conversations with the children. Using gentle tones this promoted a relaxed atmosphere.

Children are encouraged to use the toilet and engage in handwashing independently with assistance provided where needed.

Supporting Relationships

The children appeared happy and content and were engaged and relaxed within the care room. The staff members ensured that the children were supported in all aspects of their physical, emotional and social wellbeing and demonstrated warmth and respect in all interactions with the children. Staff members were heard

encouraging children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and teamwork.

Physical and Material Environment

The indoor environment was bright and arranged into defined areas of interest, providing children with freedom to play and explore. Designated interest areas within the room included an arts and crafts and mark making station, a construction area, a dolls house, a dress-up area, a home corner, a play kitchen, and a library area. Photos of each child's family were displayed in photo frames in the home corner area of the room at their level. Birthday charts and children's artwork were also on display, and this demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.

On the day of inspection children were engaged in a craft and gluing activity.

Staff informed the inspector that children enjoy time in the outdoor play area daily, where possible. Children were not observed to play in this space on the day of inspection as the registered provider informed the inspector that a risk assessment had been carried out in the morning and the grass surface was not suitable following recent bad weather. Equipment and materials available appear to provide appropriate learning opportunities for the children based on their age and stage of development. The outdoor area was surfaced with natural grass and had a sand pit with equipment. There was a storage unit next to the area which contained equipment for use including balls and ride-on toys.

Programme of Activities

During the inspection it was evident that children's individual choice was respected in the daily routine in which they are encouraged to participate. There are picture cues and visual displays on the wall at their level to support them to make decisions on their play throughout the day. Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment, engaged in movement activities and relaxing activities both individually and as a group.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in conversation where the adults gave children time and encouraged them to use words to describe their thoughts and feelings and in sharing stories on matters important to them.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured with a buzzer system to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.

Visitors to the premises were required to sign in on arrival to the premises.

The kitchen, and storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and paper towels were available to facilitate hygienic handwashing for both staff and children.

Lunch boxes that included perishable food items were stored in the fridges in the kitchen in line with safe food guidance.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of anti-febrile medication and prescribed medication and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspectors.

There were two care plans in place in the service, one of which was for a child who may require an auto adrenaline injector. Staff within the room demonstrated a clear understanding of the location of this emergency medication, symptoms and procedure to be followed in the event of a medical emergency.

Fire Safety:

On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

Outing:

Following discussion with the registered provider and staff on the day of inspection, they informed the inspector that they do not take the children on outings during the year, other than one outing to a play centre at the end of the year and parents attend this with their child.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. On the day of inspection, thermostatically controlled warm water was not available for hand washing at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation adjoining the care room or in the sink in the care room. The water in both the hot tap and the cold tap felt cold to touch. This is not conducive to effective hand washing and poses a risk of cross contamination and the spread of infection.

Fire Safety:

2. A review of documentation evidenced that fire drills are not occurring monthly in the service. The last recorded fire drill was documented to have taken place on 15 October 2024. Not practising regular fire drills can hinder the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider has advised that they have spoken to the centre management team explaining the requirement to have consistent warm water available. The boiler has been checked, and hot water has returned. The registered provider has also requested that an under counter heater be installed to ensure that warm water is available at all times in the future.

Fire Safety:

Completion of fire drills has resumed and have been recorded monthly since the inspection. Fire drill records have been moved to a more visible place in the room and will be recorded monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

The registered provider has submitted a letter from the centre management confirming that a new under counter heater will be installed in the care room in the coming weeks. Ensuring that warm water is available has also been added to a daily risk assessment checklist, a copy of which has been submitted for review.

Fire Safety:

The registered provider has submitted copies of the completed fire drill records carried out since the previous inspection.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider. The non-compliances identified here under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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) Three staff members are trained in first aid responder (FAR) training and immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available and safely stored on the premises.

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)

While it is acknowledged that there was a record of fire drills, the last recorded fire drill was documented as having been carried out on 15 October 2024. Please refer to regulation 23 of this report.

(b)

A record was maintained of when the fire detection system and smoke alarms were last serviced on 20 September 2024.

Firefighting equipment records were available demonstrating that these were last serviced in September 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous places throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance which expires on 05 March 2025 for a sessional service which covers 22 children