

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS225
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Name of Service:	Jonix Educational Services
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Address of Service:	153 Carrig Court, Fortunestown Lane, Saggart, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Hansen
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	11/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	10
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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
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Description of service

This service is one of seven services privately operated by Jonix Educational Services Ltd. The service offers a specialised programme for children who have been diagnosed with autism. It opens from 9am to 1pm and 1:30pm to 5:45pm and accepts children between the ages of two and six years. The service is provided from two rooms in a purpose-built single storey building in a residential area of Citywest, County Dublin. An outdoor area can be accessed directly from each room.

Staffing

There are 12 staff members employed to work directly with the children. The registered provider also employs a regional manager, clinical manager, behaviour support specialist and an early years facilitator to work across a number of the provider's services.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Class 8.

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 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.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) All staff had past employer references available. A second reference from a reputable source had been sourced for staff members who had only one previous employer. Records were available of the verification checks that had been carried out.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff members.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for the staff members who had lived abroad as adults for more than six consecutive months.

(4) Two staff members employed to work directly with children held awards in Early childhood Care and Education between Level 6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Ten staff members employed to work directly with children did not hold an award in Early childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. This regulation was non-compliant on the previous two inspections. Management at that time reported that a request had been made to the minister to receive an exemption due to the provision of a specialised programme. An exemption was not granted.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider is in correspondence with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth as well as the Department of Education on this matter. All staff are registered with the Teaching Council. Jonix Human Resources department continues to favour and screen for those with a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education and recognition from the teaching council.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

9(4) The regulatory requirement remains outstanding.

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 with the children. There were 10 adults working with 10 children.

(2) At all times the minimum required ratio of adults to children was 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-

(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

Staff spoke kindly and respectfully to the children at all times. The service had a documented daily routine which was displayed in pictures on the wall at the children's eye level. Picture cards were available to support non-verbal communication. Transitions between activities were competently managed with the adults telling the children in advance of the next activity and showing them the associated picture. This helped create smooth and calm transitions.

The inspector observed the children engaged in activities which included free play, group work, and outdoor play. The children's room was resourced with equipment and materials suitable to the developmental stages of the children. This included puzzles, mark-making materials, construction toys, water, and small world toys to support fine motor skills, sensorial development, and role play. A small trampoline was available for therapeutic use under supervision. Staff supported language development by using descriptive commentary and songs

during activities and incorporating communication time and books into the daily routine. Ongoing individual child observations and assessments were documented. These observations informed the planning for the children's 'Individualised Education Programme'. The children participated in four one-to-one sessions daily to support their individual learning and development goals.

The children played outdoors and wore coats appropriate for the weather. Equipment was available to support gross motor development including climbing frames, ride-on toys, slides, and balls. The inspector observed the children engaging in whole body movement including running, climbing, and balancing.

The children were supported towards independence with their activities of daily living. They hung their coats and bags on allocated hooks which were labelled with their photograph and name. They brought food from home which they ate together with the adults. These times were observed to be relaxed and social with the adults sitting and engaging with the children. Staff told the inspector that they operate a 'Fun with Food' initiative twice per year in partnership with parents to support healthy eating. Drinks of water were always visible and available. The children were supported with toilet training and staff were available to assist with personal care as needed. An area was available for children to rest or take a break during transitions.

Records were available to show that staff work closely with families in preparing and reviewing the children's individual programme of learning and care. The adults demonstrated the skills required to manage challenging behaviour in a positive manner. Staff were consistent in their approach, communicated clearly in low voices and used distraction techniques and praise to support children's behaviour.

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 registered provider had taken appropriate measures to safeguard the children from harm as outlined in the examples below.

- Exits were kept clear for the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency.
- The entrance was secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child leaving unsupervised.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping and injury.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The registered provider had taken appropriate measures to control the spread of infection within the service as outlined in the examples below.

- The premises and equipment were clean and well maintained.
- The service had an infection control policy and cleaning schedules were in place.
- Measures were taken to encourage good handwashing practices. Pictures were displayed at children's eye level outlining the steps to be taken when washing and drying hands to support their independence. Sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water and liquid soap. Paper towel dispensers were located within reach of the children. Children were reminded and assisted to wash their hands at required times including after using the toilet and before eating.
- A container was available for staff to place toys/items that had been mouthed in during the day to prevent them being re-circulated between the children.

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) Records were available of fire-drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated November 2023.
 - (b) Records were available demonstrating the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced in November and September 2023 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were clearly displayed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had an insurance certificate for 12 children dated from 28 March 2023 until 27 March 2024.