

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015DY107

**Name of Service:** Larkhill Playgroup

**Address of Service:** Larkhill G.N School, Larkhill Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9, Co. Dublin

**Eircode:** D09 YR59

**Name of Registered Provider:** Pauline Eady

**Service type:** Part Time

**Date(s) of Inspection:** 01/11/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	N/A
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Early Years Inspectorate  
2nd Floor, Unit 4/5  
The Nexus Building  
Blanchardstown Corporate Park  
Ballycoolin  
Dublin 15 | D15 CF9K

**Inspection undertaken by:** C. Kerrigan

**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.

### Description of service

Larkhill Playgroup is located within Holy Cross Girls-National School since 1996. The registered provider also runs a second service in the nearby Holy Cross Boys National School.

This service offers part-time and sessional childcare and education to children aged from 2 to 6 years old.

The opening hours are from 8.45am to 2.45pm, Monday to Friday, following the school calendar year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

### Staffing

There are 3 members of staff employed by the registered provider to work directly with children. The registered provider works between both services providing administrative support and working directly with the children when required.

### 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

- Regulation 9
- Regulation 11
- Regulation 16(k)
- Regulation 19(a)
- Regulation 23
- Regulation 25
- Regulation 28

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16(k).

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
- (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) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as required.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was present at all times throughout the inspection.
- (2) The files of 4 adults were reviewed as part of the inspection, to include the registered provider who works in the service in a relief capacity and 3 staff members.

(a) The registered provider had 1 written reference from a past employer available for 2 staff members who work directly with the children.

(b) The registered provider had 1 written and validated reference from a reputable source for 2 staff members who work directly with the children.

(c) The registered provider ensured that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 4 adults working within the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(d) Police vetting was not required as no member of staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period no longer than six consecutive months.

(4) The registered provider ensured that 2 members of staff who worked directly with the children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Qualification Framework.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider did not ensure that 2 written references from a reputable source were validated for 1 staff member. There were no written references available for the registered provider on the day of inspection.

(4) The registered provider did not have documentation available to demonstrate that 2 adults who work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Quality Framework.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) Files for two members of staff have been fully completed to include validated and written references.

(4) Staff files have been checked and Qualification certificates have been added to the staff files.

### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) Photographic evidence of written and validated references was submitted.

(4) Photographic evidence of staff members QQI award.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliances outlined above under Regulation 9 have been met.

### 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working directly with the children attending the service. There were 3 adults working with 18 children aged from 2 years 11 months to 4 years and 4 months of age.

(2) The minimum ratio of adult to children was maintained throughout the inspection and this was verified by the staff sign in records available. The adult to child ratios were maintained as follows: 3 adults were providing direct care to 18 children aged between 2 years 11 months and 4 years 4 months of age.

(8)(a) The register provider ensured that there was a minimum of 2 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:*

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

#### Compliance Information

(1)(k) A sample of 7 accident and incident records were reviewed and were found to be completed in full with all the necessary details included.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs

- The service had a healthy eating policy which supports parents with their choice of snacks. Children were observed eating sandwiches, fruit and yogurt that had been sent in from home for snack time. Water was made freely available to each child to access throughout the day. Lunches were stored in each child's individual bags, with parents providing snacks and lunches. A fridge was available for the storage of perishable food items.
- Several children were noted to be toilet trained, supervision and support was given as needed in a respectful and dignified manner. Toileting was scheduled and facilitated as required.
- Children were observed to move around the care room freely and engage in a variety of activities and play experiences.

### Physical and Material Environment

- Staff ensured that the Care room environment was a bright and inviting space for the children to enrich their play experiences, with a range of developmentally appropriate toys and materials which were easily accessible to the children. Children's personal artwork and achievements were on display throughout. Areas of interest included.
  - Well-resourced kitchen and home areas
  - A rest area with soft flooring underfoot, a low level easily cleaned couch with a canopy, which invites relaxation.
  - Mark making areas. Small world corners and dress up areas to invite imaginary play.
  - Materials and equipment provided for fine and manipulative skills tasks, arts and crafts and imaginary play and learning.
- The ambient room temperature of the care room was maintained between the recommended temperatures of 18°C and 22°C.
- The outdoor area was secured by a wooden fence. The area had a selection of wooden ride on toys, tent making equipment. There was a selection of ride on scooters and bicycles appropriate to the children's developmental ages.

### Supporting Relationships

- Staff members within the service were observed being kind and respectful towards the children in their care. First names were used, and children were observed being listened to and encouraged to express their thoughts and feelings. An emphasis on positive praise and encouragement was observed throughout the inspection. The service has a long-established relationship with the school and community, these relationships are encouraged, for example during the morning an older sibling was noted to come to the door and give their younger sibling a hug. Staff demonstrated knowledge of children's families.

### 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 main door was secured on the inspector’s unannounced arrival to the service. Access was granted via call bell system upon which access is granted by a member of staff, thus preventing unauthorised persons accessing the service and children exiting the premises unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment available in the care rooms were maintained in good working order and free from hazards.
- Flexes were appropriately secured in the care room.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition throughout, with the premises and equipment observed to be visually clean.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap, and paper towels.
- Lidded pedal bins were provided for the disposal of waste in the care rooms and in the sanitary facilities.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Staff were able to discuss the procedure for safe administration of medication within the service if medication was prescribed for a child. Medication was not observed being given during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely away from children.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire escape routes and procedures were easily identifiable in the care room, with staff outlining the process. For example, during the inspection the fire alarm was triggered, both staff and children demonstrated their familiarity with the fire drill procedures lining up at the door in a relaxed, knowledgeable and safe manner. Smoke alarms and emergency lighting was evident throughout the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A low-level cupboard which was accessible to children within the care room, held cleaning agents was not securely locked, exposing children to hazardous materials.

#### Infection Control:

2. Handwashing practices were noted to be inconsistent within the service. For example, Children were noted as not having their hands washed prior to mealtimes which may result in the cross contamination of harmful bacteria resulting in sickness.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Cleaning materials have been placed on high shelving away from the reach of children

#### Infection Control:

2. Handwashing was discussed with staff and will be discussed at each Staff meeting.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photo evidence has been submitted.

### Summary Comment

Compliance for this regulation has been met through the corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider.

### 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 certificate in first aid response was held by one staff member who was available to the children during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position within the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the pre-school service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

There was evidence of the parttime preschool service being insured. The service is insured for a maximum of 46 children with insurance commencing on the 26 August 2024 and ending on the 27 March 2025.