

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DY109 |
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| Name of Service: | Larkin Early Education Service |
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| Address of Service: | Ballybough Community Centre, Ballybough Road, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin |
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| Eircode: | DO3 XT26 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Maria Tyrrell |
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| Service type: | Full Day |
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| Date(s) of Inspection: | 05/10/2023 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 22 | PM | 22 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15. |
| Inspection undertaken by: | E Hosford |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable. |
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Description of service

Larkin Early Education Service is a community service providing a full-time service to children aged from 2 to 5 years of age and operates from 8:30am to 2:30pm Monday to Friday. The purpose-built service operates from the second floor of a multi-use community centre on the north side of Dublin city. There are two care rooms, namely, Room 1 (2-3 years) and Room 2 (3-5 years). An enclosed outdoor play area was available to the children within the service and access to an all-weather pitch was also provided on the ground floor.

Staffing

The service employs ten staff members, to include the service manager, a designated person in charge, a cook, housekeeper and six childcare staff. There were six staff members working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4)

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1),(2),(8)(a),

Regulation 15 Record of pre-school child (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i),

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 25 First Aid (1),(2) and
Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures (1)(a)(b), (4).

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 service manager, designated 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 had a designated person in charge and a named person who was available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced and was available throughout the inspection.

(2) The staff files of ten employees working within the service were reviewed.

(a) The following references were available from a past employer.

- Two validated written references were available for six staff members.
- One validated written reference was available for three staff members.

(b) The following references were from a source other than a past employer.

- Two validated written references were available for one staff member.
- One validated written reference was available for three staff members.

(2)

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for ten staff members.

(d) Police vetting from six countries was available in respect of five adults who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Eight staff members employed within the service had evidence to confirm they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 6 adults working with 22 children aged between 2-5 years of age during the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained on the day of inspection as outlined below.

- **Room 1** - 3 adults were caring for 9 children aged 2-3 years.
- **Room 2** - 3 adults were caring for 13 children aged 3-5 years.

(8)(a) on review of the staff roster it was confirmed that two adults were present on the premises during the operation of the early years' service.

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)
- (a) to (i)
- On review of the documentation relating to the children in attendance in Room 2, the required information and details were available and complete.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The two care rooms were bright, colourful, and inviting and laid out in clear and identifiable areas of interest with materials and equipment available to enable the children to explore and develop their interests. A home area with play kitchen, shop, table and chairs, dolls, buggies, play food, shopping baskets, utensils, dishes, pots, and pans, a construction space with cars, trucks, train tracks and building blocks. Sensory play was available to the children to engage with dried beans and pasta, lentils, sand, hay, paint, and water. Tabletop games of jigsaws, puzzles and games were stored on low level shelving and art supplies of paint, paper, pencils, and crayons were in reach of the children. Both rooms had rest areas to include, soft matting, cushions, and books. The furniture provided in the care rooms were low level and age appropriate for the children attending with toys and play materials accessible to the children and stored on low level shelving.
- An additional sensory space was available in the main hallway between the care rooms which enabled the children to play in small groups and access a large open tray of dried oats and lentils, a rest area consisting of a tent, cushions, books, and soft toys.
- The walls and doors throughout the service were decorated with the children’s completed artwork along with their family and birthday walls. Pictures of the children and the service were used to assist children with their meal choices, daily routines and accessing play materials.
- The roof top enclosed outdoor area was surfaced in a soft matting and had a large wooden teepee structure to enable the children to shelter from inclement weather. The children could access play kitchens, slides and balls. The ground floor all weather pitch was available to the service when they required a larger space for ball games and running.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff held First Aid Responder (FAR) certification training. Three staff currently hold FAR certification.

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)
The last recorded fire drill that took place in the service was on the 3 October 2023.

(b)
The number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was present in the service. Fire extinguishers were serviced on the 10 October 2022 and smoke alarms were serviced on the 14 August 2023.

(4)
A notice of the fire procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were clearly displayed in the main hallway of the service and in the care rooms.