

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015DY119

**Name of Service:** Little Learners

**Address of Service:** 54 Iona Crescent, Drumcondra, Dublin 9.

**Eircode:** D09 HX37

**Name of Registered Provider:** Nessa McNamara

**Service type:** Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 02/04/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C.Kerrigan and G. Kavanagh
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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

Little Learners offers a part-time and sessional care and education to children aged from 2-6 years old. The service opens from 08:45am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is situated in a two-storey premises in a residential area of Drumcondra. There are four care rooms, Rainbow Room and Castle Room are located on the ground floor along with a kitchen and sanitary area. Seomra Glas and Seomra Sasta are located on the first floor, along with sanitary areas. The covered outdoor area is located to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs eight staff to work within the service. On the day of inspection there was eight staff available to provide direct care to the children, this included the person in charge who was working in a relief capacity across the service. The registered provider works in an administrative capacity and does not provide direct care to the children. On the day of inspection there were also five students present in a supernumerary capacity within the service.

### 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) (j)(k) Record in Relation to a Pre-School Service, Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of a Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Castle Room and Seomra Glas.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 to deputise if required.
  - (b) A review of the roster showed that a named person in charge or the deputy is rostered to be on the premises at all times during the service opening hours.
- (2) The files of fourteen adults working within the service to include the registered provider, the person in charge, seven early years workers and five students were reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were nineteen written and validated references available from a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
  - (b) The registered provider ensured that there were nine written and validated references available from a source other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all fourteen adults working within the service. With the service adhering to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) The registered provider ensured that police vetting obtained for four adults who had resided in a country other than Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that all references and garda vetting procedures were completed prior to all adults working within the service being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) The register provider and the eight adults who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed, all held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working with the children in the service at all times throughout the day. Eight early years staff were available in the building to meet the care needs of thirty-two children who were present on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratios were maintained within the service on the day of inspection. This was further evidenced in the roster.

- (8)
- (a) From review of the roster and conversation with staff present on the day of inspection, the registered provider ensured that there was a least two adults on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

## 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:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

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

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) A review of seven medication administration records were sampled, three medication administration records were found to be fully completed.
- (k) A sample of ten accident and incident records were reviewed and were found to be fully completed with all necessary information included.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (j) The registered provider did not ensure medication administration records were fully completed in four records reviewed on the day. The following details were omitted.
- Three records did not have a second staff signature.
  - Two records did not have a parent signature acknowledging the administration of medication. Posing a risk that parents were unaware of what medication was administered.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that medication records were reviewed with missing information retrospectively completed when possible. All staff received re-education on medication administration. The medication administration policy has been updated to include the need for two staff signatures when medication is administered, with parents required to review and sign the medication record at the time of collection. A medication audit checklist has been implemented and is reviewed weekly by the manager to ensure all medication records are complete and compliant.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

None

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 16.

### 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

(1) (a) The registered provider ensured that the children learning, development and wellbeing is facilitated within the service in the following ways.

#### Basic Needs

- The children were provided with regular snacks and meals. This included lunches which were prepared at home and brought into the service. On the morning of inspection, the children were observed to have a selection of fruit of differing sizes, sandwiches, wraps and a drink of water from children's own bottles, with an alternative food option available if needed. The transition to mealtime was observed to be a timely experience for the children, at a pace that suited their needs.

- A number of children in the care rooms were observed to be toilet trained. Toileting was undertaken on scheduled basis and as needed; children were observed to have unrestricted access to the toilet with staff promptly picking up on children's cues for assistance, whilst providing positive praise with children's efforts. This was completely in a dignified child centred manner.
- There was a rest area available in the care room if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- Children were provided with appropriate clothing for outdoor play, independence with self-care skills were promoted with children being encouraged to put on coats themselves. This promotes independence and facilitates comfort in the play with lunch and snacks throughout their time in the service.

### Supporting Relationships

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and respectful manner, sitting with children during play and mealtimes. This provides opportunities to support children's learning and development.
- In the Castle room children were observed to have time to discuss their day and feelings with adults using pictures and prompts to link feeling and emotions for each child, promoting emotional development of the child.
- Adults within the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and respectful manner, there was an atmosphere of calm.
- Staff reported an open-door policy for parents, with drop off and pick up times being utilised to share information about the children's day, work journals are also completed by the children to be brought home to parents acting as a bridge between home and preschool.

### Physical Environment and Equipment

- The care rooms were bright and inviting play spaces, with furniture provided in the room low level and appropriate for children attending with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children, displayed on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available including mark making, a home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate

creative play, cars and tracks for transporting, books and STEM activities available to facilitate language and early literacy development.

- Images of the children and their families were displayed throughout the room which promoted a sense of identity and belonging.
- The children had access to the outdoor environment throughout the day. This is scheduled but also available to children if and when they needed. This covered outdoor area had absorbent flooring underfoot, a playhouse, climbing wall with crash mat, swings, sand trays, kitchen with props giving an array of option to develop gross motor skills.
- The outdoor area was partially enclosed allowing for play to be undertaken in inclement weather.

### 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 to the service was secure upon the inspector's unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- The ambient room temperatures in the service were kept between the recommended 18-22°C.
- The outdoor area was fully secured and enclosed with fencing and high walls.
- The flooring in the outdoor area was shock absorbent, therefore preventing injury.
- Both indoor and outdoor risk assessments were displayed and completed within the service.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was service was clean and well maintained throughout. Cleaning schedules were on display through the service outlining frequency of cleaning.
- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing potential cross contamination.
- Thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were in use throughout the service for hand drying purposes, ensuring good handwashing practices.

## Administration of Medication:

- Adults across the service were familiar with emergency medication procedures, demonstrating knowledge on the procedure for medication administration and the steps to take in the event of emergency medication being needed.
- Emergency medication was clearly labelled and accessible to children who needed it within each care room. Ensuring prompt response to an emergency.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

1. Perishable food items brought in from home were not refrigerated in a consistent manner across the service. Potentially exposing children to harmful bacteria.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

The registered provider stated that the class teacher will ensure lunches are placed in the fridge upon the children's arrival to the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

None.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

### 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
  - (b) an employee, and
  - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation.
- (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 registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 31 March 2025.
  - (b) A record available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating it was last serviced on the 6 December 2024, and the number, type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms throughout the service, these were last serviced in March 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the inspector.
- (4) A notice was displayed throughout the service indicating the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.