

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY273
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Name of Service:	TCD Day Nursery
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Address of Service:	House 49-50, Trinity College Dublin, College Green, Dublin 2, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Orla Cunningham
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	28
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin
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

TCD Day Nursery is a community run full day care service which currently opens 830am-5pm Monday-Friday. The service operates from the ground floor of a converted building on the grounds of Trinity college campus providing Early Education and Care to the children of teachers and students attending the college. The service is comprised of five care rooms, a parents room, kitchen, staff room and an office. The service caters for 51 children aged 0-5 years.

The setting has two outdoor areas which are located on opposite sides of the service. One area is partitioned into two sections allowing the children from the baby room to have their own outdoor space. This area has recently been renovated and the surface of the refurbished area is covered with a soft rubber flooring.

Staffing

The registered provider employs seventeen staff to work in the service including two people in charge, two agency staff and a cook. Fourteen staff were present on the day of inspection; eleven of whom were working directly with the children in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the children in 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4) Management and Recruitment

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

Regulation 19(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28 Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9, 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the baby room and the wobbler room.

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 two staff members 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 two designated persons in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
- (b) The two designated persons in charge and the deputy were present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service throughout the session.
- (c) There was a clearly defined management structure in the service. Staff identified the person in charge and deputy person in charge to the inspector.

It was confirmed with the person in charge that two new staff members have been employed since the last inspection.

The files of the two new staff members along with the files of two agency staff were reviewed as part of the inspection. In addition, the files of all seventeen staff were reviewed to ensure each staff member had up to date Garda Vetting Disclosures.

(2)(a)(b) Two written and validated references were available from a previous employer in relation to three out of the four staff files reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures dated before the employment start date were available on file for the four staff members. All seventeen staff files had up to date Garda Vetting Disclosures.

(d) International police vetting was available in relation to three out of the four staff members who had resided outside of the state for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that all staff members held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) Two written and validated references were not available from a past employer in relation to one staff member.

(d) International police vetting was not available in relation to one staff member who had resided outside of the state for more than 6 months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The registered provider has stated that there are now two written and validated references available from the past employer of the staff member instead of the internal references which had been previously accepted from Trinity as the staff member had worked with the nursery for 6 months as agency staff. The registered provider has stated that International Police checking has now been requested for the agency staff member. This agency staff member will not be used again until fully vetted.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that management will ensure that all past employer references are external in future. The registered provider has stated that the agency will be required to ensure that all staff are fully vetted including Irish staff who have lived abroad. Trinity Day Nursery Management will confirm this before accepting agency staff in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of two written and validated references obtained from past employers.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider addressed the non-compliances identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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 was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:

During the morning:

The Baby Room – Two adults caring for three children aged between 4 months to 12 months.

The Wobbler Room – One adult caring for four children aged between 12 months to 20 months.

The Toddler Room – Two adults caring for five children aged between 1 ½ years to 2 ½ years old.

The Play Group Room- One adult caring for six children aged between 2 ½ years to 3 ½ years old.

The Montessori Room -Three adults caring for three children aged between 3 ½ years to 5 years.

During the afternoon:

The Baby Room – Two adults caring for three children aged between 4 months to 12 months.

The Wobbler Room – One adult caring for five children aged between 12 months to 20 months.

The Toddler Room – Two adults caring for six children aged between 1 ½ years to 2 ½ years old.

The Play Group Room- One adult caring for six children aged between 2 ½ years to 3 ½ years old.

The Montessori Room -Three adults caring for eight children aged between 3 ½ years to 5 years.

(8)(a) Two staff members were present at all times in the service as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

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 following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- Staff were observed interacting with children sitting on the floor at their level using soft tones and a supportive manner. This modelled positive interactions.
- The service promoted healthy eating. Staff reported a three-week food menu is shared with parents and guardians and alternative meal options are available for children. For example, children in the baby room were observed to eat sweet potato casserole whereas the older children were observed to be offered a sweet potato and rice deli dish. Chopped pear and banana was served after the dinner and children were offered cheese, ham, tomatoes, cucumber, peppers served with a bread roll for afternoon snack.
- Nappy changing was done routinely three times a day and as needed to ensure the child's comfort.
- Children from all care rooms were observed to access the different outdoor areas during the day. This supports their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Children in the wobbler room were observed to be supported to clean up following activities. Staff were observed to show the children how to tidy up and praise them for doing so. This fostered independence and self-esteem.
- Children were given sufficient time to enjoy their snacks and dinner. Staff were observed sitting with children during their meals. This facilitated mealtimes to be a social occasion for children to engage with peers and staff.
- Language used by staff was observed to be kind, considerate and supportive. For example, in the Baby room during nappy changing procedures children were observed to be spoken to in a reassuring and friendly manner throughout the nappy changing procedure. Additionally, at sleep time staff spoke to children in a kind and reassuring manner. For example, the inspector observed the staff member remaining in the sleep room and singing to a child until the child fell asleep.
- The service supports settling in by accommodating parent/child visits before the child begins. This was observed on the day of the inspection. Staff were able to discuss with the parents how the service supports children to integrate and settle into the service by offering a settling in period with reduced hours to ensure a smooth transition from the home to the service. In addition, staff discussed how there was a parent room available where parents could breast feed in comfort if required.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the baby and wobbler rooms were low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. For example, in the baby room there was adequate space for the babies to explore their environment. Materials and equipment included a sensory box, lots of building blocks, connecting equipment, push along toys, easy grip peg wooden puzzles, a treasure basket and cause and effect toys, for example, musical battery-operated toys. Cause and effect toys help promote attention, play skills and exploration.
- There was a cosy area observed in the baby room with soft padding, cuddly soft toys, and books. There were two adult armchairs to support the comforting of children, and these were observed in use during the inspection.
- A variety of wall displays and photos promoted a sense of belonging for the children. These included a birthday wall, a family wall and all about me posters.
- The outdoor back garden used by the older children had ride on vehicles, scooters, cars, balls, a wooden canape tent and a newly build large wooden outdoor playhouse.

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 to the service was secure. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the service unknown to staff and prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents within care rooms were observed to safely stored out of reach of children.
- Bottles of milk supplied by parents/guardians were observed to be stored in the fridge.
- The access gate leading to the entrance of the childcare facility located in the outdoor play area was observed to be secure.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- Furniture in the baby room was observed to have sharp corner protectors on the shelving units and the radiators had wooden protective covers.

Infection Control:

- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition with documented cleaning records available.
- Soothers were observed to be hygienically stored.
- Children had individual labelled cups and bottles for drinking water.
- Children had individual labelled boxes to store nappies and lotions.
- Windows were opened throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate in the care rooms.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were used for the disposal of rubbish in the care rooms.
- There was warm water, hand soap and paper hand towels to support hygienic hand washing.

Safe Sleep:

- Cots and mats used for sleeping children were observed to be in good condition free from hazards.
- Staff were aware of safe sleep procedures. A staff member in the baby room explained how they ensure a safe sleeping environment, removing additional clothing before sleep and the use of cellular blankets.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in the baby cot room for children under 1 year old.

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in the Wobbler care room where children aged over 1 year old were sleeping.
- Lighting was subdued in both sleep rooms and soft music was played.
- Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes by staff members during sleep time of children. Staff recorded each child's position, skin colour and breathing pattern.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. On the day of inspection, it was observed that the emergency exit door outside of the baby sleep room was cluttered with a bag and umbrella. In addition, there was no staff sign in/sign out book available. Both factors reduced the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Management removed the bag and umbrella from the emergency door area on the day of the inspection. The registered provider has stated that a daily signing in and out sheet has been put in place for staff to ensure safe effective evacuation.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that the nursery staff will ensure that emergency exits are clear each morning and throughout the day to ensure safe evacuation. The nursery staff will also ensure they have signed in and out each day and management will check the sign in and sign out daily sheet.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the emergency door cleared of any obstructions.
- Photographic evidence of the new daily sign in and sign out sheet.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

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) There was evidence to show that three staff had completed First Aid Responder Training. The expiry date on two of the certificates was June 2025 and on the other certificate was March 2026.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position 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) A record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 4 December 2023.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was available.

- Records showed that the firefighting equipment has been inspected yearly with the most recent inspection on 25 August 2023.
- Records showed that the smoke alarm system has been serviced yearly with the most recent service taking place on 27 March 2023.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was not displayed in the service. This reduced the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The registered provider has stated that the fire evacuation procedures which had been removed during construction have now been reinstated in all the rooms to ensure safe effective evacuation.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that management will ensure the fire evacuation procedures continue to be clearly displayed in all the rooms and staff will follow them in the event of an evacuation.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of the fire evacuation procedures on display in the service.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 26 Fire Safety.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the service from 02 October 2023 to 1 October 2024.