

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL138
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	The Little Learners Corner
-------------------------	----------------------------

Address of Service:	Swords Manor, Brackenstown Road, Swords, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	-----------------------------------------------------

Eircode:	K67 K6W7
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Cummins
-------------------------------------	----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	10/12/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	17
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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:	Á Dunne
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

The Little Learners Corner is a privately owned early years service that provides full day care, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged between 2 – 5 years, operating Monday to Friday from 7.30 a.m. to 5.30 p.m. The service is located in a shopping mall in North County Dublin. There are 3 care rooms in the service. There are sanitary facilities for children and staff, a kitchen, an office and an outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs six adults to work directly with children in the service. On the day of the inspection, 6 adults were working in the service and the registered provider was not present.

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 the regulations 9, 11, 16, 19, 23, 24, 25 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

Regulation 11 Staffing levels was assessed across all rooms.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the three rooms - Playschool room, Preschool 1 room and Preschool 2 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 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

(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

The files of the registered provider and six staff members employed within the service were reviewed:

(2) The registered provider had two written references and had completed the following checks:

(a) Eight validated written references were available from a past employer.

(b) Four validated written references were available from a source other than a previous employer:

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and six members of staff in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults working directly with the children who had lived outside of the State for six months or more as adults.

(4) Documentation was available to demonstrate that the registered provider and the six staff members employed in the service held at least 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 17 children in the morning and 5 adults working with 17 children in the afternoon.

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

- **Playschool Room** - 1 adult was caring for 4 children in the morning and for 3 children in the afternoon, aged 2-3 years.
- **Preschool Room 1-** 2 adults were caring for 5 children in the morning and 3 adults were caring for 14 children in the afternoon aged 3 - 5 years.
- **Preschool Room 2** - 2 adults were caring for 8 children in the morning, aged 3-5 years.

With the deputy person in charge available to support during mealtimes, nappy changes and staff breaks.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that two adults were present on the premises during the operation 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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)(i) There was a record available of a staff roster and evidence of staff sign in and out of the service on a daily basis .

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

Basic Needs:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals and a hot meal to the children. Breakfast was served between 7.30am and 8.40am and a morning snack is served at 10am. On the day of inspection, the inspector observed a hot meal supplied by an external food company, served at 12.05pm in the Playschool room of croquettes with mild turkey chilli. At 12.15pm the children from Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2, came together and beef patties, peas and mashed potato was served. At 2.30pm, afternoon snack for all the children, made in the service kitchen, was served which was beans, brioche rolls with fruit. Water was available for the children to drink.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- The transitions between activities such as nappy changes, sleep time, mealtimes, free play and outdoor play were observed to be calm and relaxed with staff available to care for the individual needs of the children.
- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.
- At sleep time, the Playschool room was darkened to provide for a restful environment and low stackable beds with individual bedding were available to the children who required sleep.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to have respectful, warm and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Staff were observed to be engaged with and sit with the children during play time and having positive interactions during play activities of dolls, jigsaws, magnetics and playing with sand. They were responsive to the children and were observed to give them choices regarding their play activities.
- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.
- Communication with parents is through verbal updates given at pick up time, through poster notes on the door of the service, with meetings and by email.

Physical and Material Environment

- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them.
- Cosy areas were present in all rooms offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises were fully enclosed, the surface of soft artificial ground. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a playhouse, a slide, a sand tray, stepping stones and construction toys

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required in accordance with the service policy.
- Soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes.
- During sleep time, low stackable beds were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs of children over two years of age were met through the provision of low stackable beds.
- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on the children for colour, breathing, position while children slept
- The temperatures of the cot room and care rooms were documented and maintained between the recommended temperatures of 18-22 °C while children over 1 years old slept and during the day.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the registered provider and six staff members. However, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.
2. A loose hose was accessible to children in the outdoor area, leading to a risk of injury.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Garda vetting has been applied for. All staff and the owners garda vetting will be checked at the start of every year and noted in the diary to apply for it when due.
2. The hose has been removed from the tap in the outside area. At present there is no hose in use. In the future if a hose is fitted it will be one that is easily put on and removed by staff who will then store it away from children. The person in charge will follow up on making sure its implemented and staff have removed the hose before children go outside to play. This is only if a hose is sourced otherwise there will be no hose in use.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photo of email of garda vetting application and completed renewed garda vetting disclosure.
2. Photographic Evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified and under Regulation 23, have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On inspection of the daily attendance register at 10.18am and at 10.52am, 17 children were present in the service and 18 children were signed in as being present, one child had not been signed out on leaving the service at 9.30am.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The service has added an extra sign in and sign out on the day that a child or children have appointments. The person in charge plus the supervisor will check all room that children are been signed in and out throughout the day to prevent this happening in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) Photo of sign in and sign out book.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 24, has been adequately addressed.

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) The service provided evidence that four adults trained in First Aid Response were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service

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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 24 November 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises demonstrating they were last both serviced on 2 October 2025.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.