

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015FL173 |
|--------------------------|-------------|

| | |
|-------------------------|------------------------|
| Name of Service: | Little Learners Creche |
|-------------------------|------------------------|

| | |
|----------------------------|--|
| Address of Service: | Parslickstown House, Ladyswell Road, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin |
|----------------------------|--|

| | |
|-----------------|----------|
| Eircode: | D15 X2VW |
|-----------------|----------|

| | |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|
| Name of Registered Provider: | Geraldine Bush |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|

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

| | |
|-------------------------------|------------|
| Date(s) of Inspection: | 03/10/2023 |
|-------------------------------|------------|

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 24 | PM | 20 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

| | |
|---|--|
| 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 & Title: | E. Griffin Early Years Inspector and S. Murray Inspection Registration Manager. |

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 Creche is located in a single-story building in Dublin and provides sessional, part-time and fulltime day care services for preschool children. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8:30am and 5:30pm and caters for up to thirty children aged between 2-6 years old. There are two care rooms in the service which include a toddler room for children aged 2-3 years old and a preschool room for children aged 3-6 years old. A temporary outdoor play area is available to the front of the service. The outdoor play area to the side of the building accessible from the pre-school room is currently undergoing renovation. The renovated outdoor play area is partially covered by a roof which will allow for outdoor play activities during inclement weather and provide shelter from the sun during the summer months. The surface of the refurbished play care is covered with soft rubber tiling mats and artificial grass.

Staffing

The service is operated by the registered provider who is also the person in charge and works in an administrative capacity providing support to the rooms when required. There are ten adults employed in the service excluding the registered provider, two of these adults are employed through the community employment scheme and work in a supernumerary capacity. On the day of the inspection the registered provider was onsite and there were six adults working directly with the children and two adults who are employed through the community employment scheme providing support in the care rooms. The registered provider and eight of the adults employed hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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 inspection was unannounced and focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9, Regulation 11, Regulation 16, Regulation 19, Regulation 23, Regulation 25, and Regulation 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under; Regulation 16- Records in relation to the preschool service 16(1)(a-k) and 16(3), Regulation 19- Health, Welfare and Development of child 19(1)(a), Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. The scope of the inspection included the two care rooms of the service but mainly focused on the Preschool Room.

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment- 9(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4) was assessed in relation to all adults working in the service.

Regulation 11- Staffing Levels 11(1), (2) and (8) were assessed across all care rooms.

Regulation 25- Fire Aid

Regulation 29- Insurance

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 registered provider, 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*
- (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.*

(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 named person in charge and a person to deputise as required. The deputy person in charge was on the premises when inspectors arrived in the service unannounced. The named person in charge arrived shortly after and both persons remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

(b) A review of the staff roster and discussion with management showed that the deputy person in charge is rostered to be present on the premises at all times.

(c) All adults working in the service were aware of the management structure in the service, the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) All adult files including the registered provider, eight adults who provide direct care to the children and two adults who work in a supernumerary capacity were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(a) There were fifteen validated written references available from recent past employers.

(b) There were seven validated written references available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting was available in respect of all eleven adults.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of the four adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.

(3) On review of the eleven files, documentation showed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to adults being appointed.

(4) Evidence was available to show that the registered provider and the eight adults who work directly with the children held 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.

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. The children were attending the service on sessional, part-time, or full day care hours.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection. The following ratios were observed:

- The Preschool Room, there were nineteen children aged between 3 to 5 years old being cared for by two adults at 10.13am in the morning. Additionally, there was an adult employed on a community employment scheme in this room providing support in a supernumerary capacity. In the afternoon there were fifteen children aged between 3 to 5 years old being cared for by two adults at 13.20pm.
- The Toddler Room, there were five children aged between 2 to 3 years old being cared for by one adult at 10.17am in the morning. Additionally, there was an adult employed on a community employment scheme in this room providing support in a supernumerary capacity. There were five children aged between 2 to 3 years old being cared for by two adults at 13.21pm during the afternoon.

(8) There are two adults present, at all times in the service as required by Regulation 11 (8) as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and adults working reported hours of attendance.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (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) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualification, and experience of the person in charge and adults working were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (c) details of the adult to child ratios in the service were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.

- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service was displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (e) the facilities available were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (f) the opening hours and fees were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention parents/guardians.
- (g) the required policies, procedures and statements of the service were available on request.
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child were available in each care room.
- (i) details of staff rosters were available in each care room and were also displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (j) a book which details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent was inspected on the day. All details were included.
- (k) a book which details any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was inspected on the day. All details were included.
- (3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were provided.

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 children's basic care needs were met on the day of inspection. The service promoted healthy eating in the service. Children were served brioche bread and fruit at morning snack time and pasta with tomato sauce for dinner. The weekly food menu was displayed on the wall and shared with parents /guardians.

- Children’s labelled water bottles were available at a water station in the preschool room within their reach throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage.
- Adults supported the children to manage their personal care. Low level hooks were available for hanging coats and personal items. Aprons were provided to protect the children’s clothes from becoming wet during water play. Children’s nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between when required. Adults were observed to use these opportunities for warm one-to-one interactions.
- The individual needs of children were met, this was observed on the day in the preschool room. Children were given a choice to play with different activities. The inspector observed one small group of children carrying out cutting activities on one table, one small group at the water station and two children in the home area. There were three adults present going between tables chatting with the children about their individual activities. One child wanted to play on the floor with dinosaurs and one of the adults found the child a mat so the child could play comfortably on the floor.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The preschool room was bright and welcoming with plenty of natural light in the setting. The room was well laid out with designated areas of interest to provide for different types of play. There was a home corner which was equipped with dress up costumes for role play, real life equipment such as telephones and electronic keyboards, a well-equipped kitchen and a wooden house with figures and furniture. There was a water play area which had various measuring tools and jugs for pouring water.
- The preschool room provided developmentally appropriate play materials and equipment that were accessible to the children on low level shelving. There were zoo animals, play figures, art materials, construction hats, vehicles, and books providing the children with lots of choice.
- There was a ‘Family Wall’ with photos of each child’s family promoting a sense of identity and belonging. There was also an ‘Animal Wall’ with photos of different animals displayed in the preschool care room. Adults working in the preschool room talked about how each child got to bring a photo in of an animal they were fond of or knew locally. It could be their own pet, a neighbour’s pet, or a family friend’s pet. The adults in the room talked about how children were really excited about this project and the idea had come about through the emergent interest of the children.
- There was a temporary outdoor play area which was set up while the back outdoor area which was being renovated on the day of inspection. This area was well equipped and well maintained.

Supporting Relationships:

- The adults working with the children were observed to be respectful, sensitive, and responsive in promoting independence skills and promoting children to make individual choices.
- A health promoting ethos was implemented in the service in relation to supporting the children's emotional well-being. There was an 'Emotion Corner' which included emotion puppets, additionally, each child had an emotion picture on the wall which helped them describe how they felt on the day of the activity. The adults talked about how this supports children's understanding of their emotions.
- The adults showed awareness of children's need for space and alone time. One of the adults described how children are provided with the opportunity to go alone into the sensory rest room which is adjoining to the preschool class. This room had low lighting, a soft area, child's sized couch and books at the children's level. There was a window and open door so the adults working in the room could check and ensure children were okay. This was further evidenced when one child got upset and told an adult they were going to have a rest in the sensory room and went in to relax for about five minutes before rejoining the other children.
- Transition between 'play time' and 'tidy up time' was recognised and supported. For example, one adult in the preschool room dimmed the lights and gave children five more minutes to play before 'tidy up time'. Five minutes later the adult reminded the children that 'play time' was up and the children and the adults began tidying with some of them singing the 'tidy up' song. Children were verbally praised and encouraged during tidy up time promoting self-confidence and independence skills.
- During snack time the adults engaged in social conversation with the children, promoting a relaxed atmosphere.
- The adults described how they share information daily about each child's day with their parent/guardian. The deputy person in charge told inspectors how the service facilitates parenting programmes in addition to the preschool service and how important it is to have positive relationships with parents/guardians.
- The service is integrated with the local working community, there is a training centre next door. The children were able to observe the trainees develop their carpentry skills from inside the preschool room and outdoor area.

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 leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised individuals from gaining access to the premises.
- Internal doors were adequately secured to prevent the children leaving the care rooms unsupervised.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was not accessible to the children.
- The external outdoor temporary play area was secure and children who were brought out to this area were observed to be supervised on the day of the inspection.

Infection Control:

- 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.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication administration records viewed by the inspector demonstrated that the administration of medication in the service was carried out correctly in line with safe practice.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Trailing flexes such as from a dehumidifier and radio were noted in both the preschool and toddler room. It is acknowledged that the children were observed to be supervised at all times during the inspection, however, trailing flexes presented a choking hazard risk to children.
2. There was a knob of a kitchen door loose on a toy kitchen in the preschool room. This loose knob was attached by a nail and presented a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

- On the day of the inspection, it was observed that the handwashing water was not warm in the sanitary accommodation in the service to support effective hand hygiene. It is acknowledged that the temperature on the thermostatically controlled hand wash basins had been reduced the day previous as the children had mentioned the water was too warm. However, not having warm water makes it harder for children to wash their hands properly and increases the risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The registered provider has confirmed that all trailing flexes are now secured, and no longer pose a choking hazard risk to children. For the preventive action the registered provider has Implemented a new daily risk assessment document. In addition, a staff member has been nominated as the Health and Safety Officer and will carry out daily risk assessments which include checking for trailing flexes and will report any health and safety issues to management.
- The registered provider has confirmed that the knob on the kitchen door has now been replaced and no longer poses a risk of injury to children. The Health and Safety Officer will carry out daily risk assessments on all toys and equipment and will report any health and safety issues to management.

Infection Control:

- The registered provider has confirmed that the hand wash basin thermostat has now been checked and the temperature increased to provide warm water for handwashing and no longer poses a risk of cross infection. The Health and Safety Officer will carry out daily checks of water temperatures in the sanitary accommodation as part of the new risk assessment checklist and will report any health and safety issues to management.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentation of new Daily Risk Assessment Check List including daily checks for trailing flexes and toys and equipment.
- Name of the Healthy and Safety Officer appointed to carry out daily risk assessments.
- Photographic evidence to show that:
 - All trailing flexes are now secured.
 - The knob on the kitchen door has now been replaced.

Infection Control:

- Documentation of new Daily Risk Assessment Check List including daily checks for water temperatures.
- Name of the Healthy and Safety Officer appointed to carry out daily risk assessments.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances 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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were trained in First Aid Response. Ten adults held an up-to-date certificate in First Aid Responder Training.

(2) (a) In both the preschool and the toddler room medication was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) First aid boxes were available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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 number of children the service can accommodate at one time and an expiry date 27 March 2024.