

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL183		
Name of Service:	Little Pumpkins Playschool		
Address of Service:	Nutstown, Oldtown, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	A45 X761		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jill Donnelly		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	09/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co.Dublin K67 Y5C6		
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Cully & AM .Coyle		
Title:	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 Pumpkins Playschool is a sessional Early Years service located in a rural setting in north County Dublin offering early childhood care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 09:30 and 13:00 hours. The state funded early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme is offered to children of eligible age for 3 hours daily, over 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from the front room and adjoining conservatory in the residential home of the registered provider. Sanitary accommodation for children is accessed through the hallway of the residence. There is an enclosed outdoor play area in the garden that is directly accessed from the conservatory. Parking is available.

Staffing

The registered provider and 2 other adults were present on the day of inspection. All 3 adults work directly with the children as early years practitioners.

Methodology

Tusla 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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9,11,15,19,23,26 and 28 These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Records of a Preschool Child.

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, 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the early years service and there was a named person available to deputise as required, both of whom were present on the day of inspection.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service on the morning of inspection

(2). Staff files met the requirements of this regulation at the previous inspection on 29.04.2021. As no new staff members began employment in the service since the previous inspection, staff files were not reviewed on this occasion.

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.
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.
- (3) The correct adult to child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There were 3 adults caring for 13 children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 9 months.

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.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Eleven registration forms were reviewed and found to be adequate written records of the required information as outlined in Regulation 15 (a) to (i).

(3)(c) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person

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 of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- On arrival, the children attending the preschool were actively engaged in meaningful play-based activities in both rooms of the service. The topic of fire safety had been introduced to the children, and they were using their learning in play by role playing firefighter duties. The 3 early years practitioners present were joining in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the adults were responsive to children's ideas and requests. This partnership creates an inclusive environment for children to learn and develop.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with supervision and assistance provided when required.
- Parents of the attending children provide food for snack time. Food was stored in a fridge located in the care room. The children were invited to help with handing out lunchboxes and water bottles. There was a relaxed and sociable atmosphere at snack time, with children chatting among themselves and the early years practitioners sitting with them to eat and talk together.

- There was a large, comfortable sofa provided in the conservatory room where children could rest if needed.
- All children engaged in outdoor play where there was opportunity for physical activity including climbing a treehouse and tractor tyres, riding toy tractors, pushing prams, digging and swinging

Supporting relationships around children:

- The 3 early years practitioners were consistent in their interactions with the children, providing regular praise and encouragement, asking open ended questions to give the children opportunity to express their thinking and feelings and ensuring that each child in the session was happy and engaged in activity. Children were also spoken about with positivity, and the practitioners demonstrated awareness and understanding about children who needed additional help and support to participate in their preschool experience in a meaningful way. These practices and attitudes support children to feel safe, secure and respected. Consistency of practice also demonstrates a strong ethos of teamwork.
- When children were in disagreement together, they sought the support of the practitioners. This demonstrated that children receive regular support and guidance from adults to problem solve with peers. The practitioners were observed to use questions, prompts, reminders and suggestions to support children in solving their arising problems together. This builds children's capacity to problem solve and resolve challenges independently, positively impacting their welfare and development.
- The inspectors observed that learning journals, floor books and transition to primary school information were used by the practitioners to capture children's learning and development. A Key Worker system was in place to achieve this. These records were shared with parents and the local schools in the best interest of the children.

Physical and material environment:

- The indoor environment was well laid out and resourced to provide a range of developmentally, challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for children. New materials had been introduced to support the exploration of the fire safety themes, such as phones and signage for an emergency responder office, helmets and costumes and a large homemade fire truck for children to roleplay with.
- The outdoor environment was rich in natural materials and provided opportunity for sensory play, physical activity and risky play. The children asked to look for worms and they were supported to do so. The practitioners modelled appreciation for nature, and children reflected this by happily touching and

holding worms and adding them to a wormery. The practitioner used this as a learning opportunity and brought supportive materials outdoors such as a book about worms.

Programme of activities to support children's development:

- Documentation, interactions and activities happening on the day demonstrated that the practitioners use an emergent and inquiry-based curriculum in the service. Children's interests are taken into account to plan meaningful activities. The floor books evidenced how topics/themes are chosen, and how the practitioner plans to incorporate numeracy, literacy, science and mathematical learning in play-based ways.

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 to the service was appropriately secured.
- The outdoor area was enclosed and secured.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Warm water and liquid soap were available at the sink in the sanitary accommodation to support effective handwashing. The children washed their hands after using the toilet and before their snack.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Cleaning schedules were implemented and up to date to ensure that surfaces, furniture, equipment etc. were cleaned and disinfected regularly.
- The fridge temperature was checked by staff weekly, and this was recorded on a health and safety document for recording of temperature checks.

Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- A couch was available for the children to rest or to take a break from activities.

Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to confirm that fire drills are completed on a monthly basis 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 record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the mains operated smoke alarms in the premises. The smoke alarms were certified as being serviced March/2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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 that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time attending sessional preschool service. The policy document showed that the service was insured from 28.03.2023 to 27.03.2024.