

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE051		
Name of Service:	Ali's Little Learners		
Address of Service:	No 2 Gregg Court, Kilmeague, Naas, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W91 YY96		
Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Leeson		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	17/10/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern		
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

Ali's Little Learners is an early years service for children aged 2-6 years. The service offers a sessional play-based service and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is operating 38 weeks per year and offers a morning session from 9:15am to 12:15pm and an afternoon session from 12:30pm to 3:30pm. The service is in an adapted commercial unit consisting of a pre-school room, a kitchen and sanitary facilities.

Staffing

There are two staff employed including the registered provider.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following Regulations.

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1),(3) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulations 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 (1), (4) - Fire safety measures
- Regulation 27 – Supervision

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 registered provider, staff member 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 a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence.
 - (b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who could deputise on the premises throughout the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place including roles and responsibilities of staff. The staff member and person in charge were aware of the lines of authority and accountability.
- (2)
- (a) (b) Past employer references were available for one staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for both adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as none of the adults had lived outside of the state.

(4) One staff member held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) There were no records to show that the references available for one staff member had been verified.

(4) One adult did not hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister. The registered provider reported that this adult was providing temporary cover until she recruits a new staff member to replace a qualified adult who had left the service recently.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) Two references have been verified and the records are on file. In future all references will be verified.

(4) No actions submitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of reference verification records.

Summary Comment

9 (2)(a)(b) The regulatory requirement has been met.

9 (4) The regulatory requirement remains outstanding and will be assessed on the next inspection.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children throughout the inspection. There were 2 staff members working directly with 14 children.

(3) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

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

Children's basic needs were effectively met. The children had access to their drinks which they brought from home in beakers. They moved freely within the preschool room, breaking midway through the session to eat. They sat together in small groups when eating. The adults sat with the children engaging in conversation and modelling

positive social behaviour. This created a warm, communal atmosphere that encouraged the children to interact with their peers and the adults. They brought nutritious food from home in accordance with the services healthy eating policy. The children used the toilet independently when they needed, with staff nearby to assist if required. Clear routines were established for handwashing before meals and after using the bathroom.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The service fostered positive relationships by offering support through attentive listening, gentle guidance, and responsive interactions. They encouraged children to work together during activities and resolve conflicts with kindness and respect. Group activities, such as shared mealtimes and collaborative play, were designed to promote social bonding, allowing children to build friendships and develop essential communication skills. The adults maintained connections with families through newsletters, phone calls and meetings to support children's social and emotional development.

Physical and Material Environment

The environment was designed to encourage exploration, independence, and creativity. Designated interest areas such as the home corner, arts and crafts station, and dress-up area were well-defined, allowing children to engage in imaginative play and creative expression. Open shelves displayed a variety of materials, including play dough, fine motor materials such as peg boards, building blocks and puzzles. These were within easy reach of the children, promoting child-led choice and decision-making. A rest area with soft cushions and books was available, offering children a space to relax or take a break from more active play.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Cleaning products and cables were kept out children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire and staff members demonstrated an awareness of fire evacuation procedures.

Infection Control:

Measures were implemented to minimise the risk of infection spreading. Sanitary facilities were well-equipped to support proper handwashing, and staff actively guided children to wash their hands after toileting and before meals. Tables were also cleaned before eating to maintain hygiene. The premises appeared clean and well-maintained, with waste properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal. Staff displayed a clear understanding of the exclusion criteria for children showing signs of contagious illness, in line with the service's infection control policy.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a medication administration policy. The registered provider confirmed that none of the children currently in attendance required medication. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the policy and procedures to administer medication if needed. This included obtaining parental or guardian consent and maintaining accurate records.

Outing:

The registered provider confirmed that the service does not undertake outings.

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) A person trained in first aid for children was always available and rostered to be present for the morning and afternoon sessions.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid box was always available for use.

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) Records were available of fire drills carried out in the service. The most recent drill recorded was dated 25 September 2024.

(b) Records were available detailing the maintenance of the smoke alarm system dated 11 June 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the preschool room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was not available detailing the maintenance of the fire fighting equipment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The document was requested from the company that serviced the firefighting equipment. The registered provider will ensure that this document is received following maintenance in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Record from external company detailing firefighting equipment in the service with date of servicing 1 February 2024.

Summary Comment

(1)(b) The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were appropriately supervised at all times, primarily by staff keeping them in sight.