

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KE160			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Early Scholars			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	25 The Old Mill Race, Athgarvan, Co. Kildare			
<b>Eircode:</b>	W12 AE42			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Suzanne Fleming			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/03/2024			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	32	PM	24
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare. W91 X38W			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	F. Maher and T. Duignan			
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Early Scholars is a private full day care pre-school service also offering part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 0-6 years old. The service is registered to provide school aged care.

This service is one of four services operated by the registered provider in Kildare and Laois.

The pre-school service is located in an adapted two story dwelling in a private residential housing estate in Athgarvan village on the outskirts of The Curragh, Co. Kildare. Five pre-school rooms, a kitchen, sleep room and a play area to the rear of the premises are provided. An office is located in a standalone unit to the rear of the building.

### Staffing

There were thirteen adults present on the day of inspection, this included nine staff working directly with the children, the general manager, person in charge, chef and office administrator. The registered provider was not present during the inspection, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were supernumerary and available to provide relief to the care rooms as required.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

Regulation 24 – Checking in and out and record of attendance.

Regulation 27 – Supervision

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Busy Bees, Super Troopers, Happy Campers 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider ,general manager, 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

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

The records of 17 staff members employed in the service were reviewed and included the registered provider.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference were available in respect of 17 adults employed whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff including the registered provider.

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 who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)  
Twelve adults employed and working directly with the children held qualifications in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent, three adults were in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, (DCEDIY).

### 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 32 children attending the service being supervised directly by 9 adults.

(2)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)  
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

### Compliance Information

(b)

Of the four pre-school rooms inspected, all had dedicated rest/relaxation areas. Busy Bees and the Wobbler room had comfortable child sized couches and Happy Campers and Super Troopers rooms had areas furnished with floor rugs and large cushions; these areas were suitable for children to rest and take a break during the day, read a book or play quietly away from the general area of activity in the room.

A sleep room with four standard cots, observed maintained in good condition with labelled safety approved mattresses, were available for children less than 2 years old requiring sleep in a cot. Low level sleep beds were available for any child aged 2 years availing of a period of sleep when attending on a full day/part time basis. Busy Bees room transitioned to a sleep room after lunch to accommodate the low level beds. Bed linen was individual to each child, was supplied and laundered weekly by parents and stored accordingly in the service. Spare bed/cot linen was available should it be required.

The lighting in the sleep room was conducive for sleeping children and at a sufficient level to allow staff complete visual checks in the dimmed environment.

The environmental temperature of the Sleep room was recorded at 20°C at 12:00pm, this was in line with recognised safe sleep room temperature environments.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and a chef is employed to freshly prepare and cook all meals and snacks daily. A four week menu was in place and currently a new menu was under development using the guidance of the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care Services document. Parents were given the opportunity to review the new menus during their implementation. The hot meals provided were observed to be varied and nutritious and included a variety of meat, potatoes and vegetables, curry dishes with meat, vegetables and rice and various pasta dishes with meat and vegetables added, snacks and tea included brown bread, fruit and vegetable pieces, scones, sandwiches with various fillings, eggs, cold meat and filled pitta pockets. Milk, water and fruit juice was available at all times to the children. The hot meal served was coronation chicken and rice with fresh orange pieces on the side. Meals were served regularly throughout the day and children's preferences were respected and catered for. In conversation with the chef, they were aware of any child with food allergies and a list of same was displayed in the service. The chef advised the kitchen was registered with the relevant authority and had been recently inspected.

### 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 arrival to the service the main entrance door was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service. Both side entrances were also secured with bolt locking mechanisms on the inside.

Cupboards were observed secured with safety clasps and medication was stored in the kitchen which was inaccessible to the children.

Daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed and maintained to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.

Staff members, in the rooms inspected, advised the inspectors they immediately cut/chop any food provided that may pose a choking risk to a child and would remove any necklace/beads if observed that a child may be wearing on arrival to the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

### **Infection Control:**

Children's hand washing routines were well established and children were observed washing their hands before snack time and following outdoor and messy play. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towel, dispensed from wall mounted units were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues, paper towel, nappies and any waste. Staff members were responsible for cleaning their individual rooms and cleaning schedules were in place for the rooms and sanitary environments.

Childrens soothers were washed with warm soapy water and stored in individually labelled containers. Bottles of formula were stored in the fridge.

### **Administration of Medication:**

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and staff members were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

### **Safe Sleep:**

The staff members in the Wobbler and Busy Bees rooms where children availed of periods of sleep either in cots or on low level beds, were familiar with current best practice guidelines in relation to reducing the risk of sudden infant death syndrome and it was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children in the service.

### **Fire Safety:**

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff advised the inspectors of the exit routes and assembly point used during evacuation procedures practiced. The fire exits were not obstructed.

### **Outing:**

Outings are not carried out from the service, this was confirmed by staff in the rooms and by the person in charge.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 3 staff members; however, this 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'.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### General Safety:

#### Corrective Action

New Garda Vetting has been obtained all 3 members of staff.

#### Preventive Action

All staff members will be vetted annually to ensure they do not run out of date again.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Documents x 3

### Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 23 has been met.

## 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.*
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
    - (iii) an employee, or*
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)  
The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the documented attendance records maintained in each pre-school room.
- (2)  
Not applicable as this was not a drop in service.
- (3)(a)(b)  
The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.
- (4)  
The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period of time.

## 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 observed being supervised by the staff caring for them at all times in the pre-school rooms, during sleep time, in the sanitary areas and outdoor play areas during the inspection. Children were observed being supervised with hand washing and dressing for outdoors as the need arose. Children were observed being adequately supervised when using the stairs.