

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE199		
Name of Service:	Shining Stars Academy Ltd		
Address of Service:	Coney Ave, Coneyboro, Athy, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	R14 KX65		
Name of Registered Provider:	Christine Bowden		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	05/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	64	PM 45
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare. W91 X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher, T. Duignan		
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	N/A
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Description of service

Shining Stars Academy is a private full day care pre-school service also offering part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 6 months-6 years old. The service is registered to provide school aged care.

This service is one of two full day care pre-school services and a standalone school age service operated by the registered provider in Athy.

The pre-school service is located in a purpose-built premises in a private residential housing estate on the outskirts of Athy Co. Kildare. Five pre-school rooms, which includes one pre-school room located in a modular unit to the rear of the premises, an office, kitchen and three play areas are provided.

Staffing

There were seventeen adults present on the day of inspection and of these, fourteen were working directly with the children along with two students who were on work placement. 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, the kitchen assistant was also 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.

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, 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 twenty-seven staff members employed were reviewed, this included the registered provider, one maintenance person and two workplace students.

(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 23 adults employed and one written and verified reference for one employed person and two workplace students present, were available of the 27 records reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults employed, the two workplace students and the registered provider. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for five adults who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Twenty-one 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a),(b)
1. Two written past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer in respect of one adult employed and one written reference in respect of a second adult employed had not been verified.

2. Two written and verified reference was required for each of the two workplace students.

(d)

Police vetting was not available for two adults who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

1 / 2.Outstanding references submitted to the inspectorate and now on file.

It has been established police clearance was not required for one staff member and police clearance is currently being sought for a second staff member.

Preventive Action

All staff files to be checked monthly by management.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents x5

Summary Comment

Following review of the submitted documents by the inspectorate, the requirement for Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) has been met, however, due to the time frame involved one document remains outstanding and the requirement for Regulation 9 (d) has not been met at this time.

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 64 children attending the service being supervised directly by 14 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

- (1)(b)
The sleep and rest facilities and equipment, provided by the service, were suitable for the ages, development stages and individual needs of the children using the service. There was one sleep room with a sufficient number of standard cots for children attending the service less than 2 years old requiring sleep in a cot.
There were three floor beds in place for any child, less than two years of age that a risk assessment indicates against a named child sleeping in a cot and that a subsequent sleep plan is in place.
There was a sufficient number of low-level beds available for children over the age of 2 years requiring a period of sleep during the day when attending on a part time/full day care basis.
Cots and sleep beds were sufficiently spaced to allow staff to easily move between them to care for or attend to the children. 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.
Individual bed linen was provided for each child and laundered on a regular basis by the service.
Each pre-school room had an area with child sized furnishings that offered a quiet comfortable space for the children to take a break from activities, rest or read a book if required.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was a sufficient amount of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available both indoors and outdoors for the children to use and play with throughout the day. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment ensured all resources were freely available and easily accessible to the children in each room at all times. Each group of children were observed actively engaging with and using the available materials/equipment in each room, this included water play, sand, playdough and art and craft materials. The resources and materials facilitated all types of play and learning and encouraged each child to experiment and use their imagination.

Child sized tables and chairs were maintained in good condition and were age appropriate allowing all children to sit comfortably for tabletop activities and when eating their snack. A highchair was available in the baby room for the safety of young children during their mealtimes.

In the Ladybird room there was a variety of resources available to the children including treasure baskets with an assortment of materials to interest the children's sense of inquiry and exploration, peg boards, simple jigsaws, shape sorters, sand tray, paper and crayons, blocks, building bricks, natural materials such as wooden circles and short lengths of wooden sticks. Small hard back books were available in the reading/ rest corner.

The children had daily access to the large outdoor play area, which was equipped with a variety of loose parts to stimulate the children's imagination, a large climbing frame and a variety of ride in/on equipment encouraged gross motor activities. A covered sand play area was equipped with props for play and digging and a further two covered areas provided areas of play during inclement weather.

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 main entrance door to the service 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.

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 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.

Children being escorted by staff, on a walk around the housing estate where the service is located, were observed wearing high visibility jackets.

Window blind cords were observed secured at all windows and 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. A staff member was responsible for cleaning in the afternoons and cleaning schedules were in place for the room and sanitary environments which were observed maintained in a clean condition.

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 care rooms 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 Ladybird room.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out. The fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

Outings were carried out from the service and the staff escorting the children from the Garden room on a short outing for a walk around the adjacent housing estate, advised the inspector they were familiar with the outings policy and were observed following the set guidance provided in the policy when inspected, for example:

- Parental consent was obtained
- Each child wore a high visibility jacket
- The attendance record was brought
- The first aid box and charged mobile phone were brought
- Adult child ratios were maintained with the addition of the workplace student as further support

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The disposable aprons used for nappy changing in Busy Bees room were observed hanging on the wall with the bottom ends in contact with the waste bin; this was inadequate for infection control purposes.
2. The practices for the immediate sterilisation of mouthing toys/ soothers in Ladybird room was not adequate for infection control purposes as evidenced by the following observations:
 - The staff members were unclear about the requirement that the toys / soother should be cleaned in soapy water initially prior to being sterilised.
 - There was no record of the concentration used of sterilisation solution to water on the small container. The sterilising method used by the service required one sterilising tablet to be dissolved in 5 litres of water.
 - Toys / equipment that were removed from the sterilising solution were rinsed under a tap which was not the correct infection control practice.

Safe Sleep:

- Two children less than two years of age were observed sleeping on floor beds in Ladybird room. There were no risk assessment or sleep plans developed and/or available for inspection; this was contrary to the safe sleep guidance issued to all services in relation to the use for children less than two years old sleeping on floor beds.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no documentary evidence available that a healthcare plan was in place for a child recently prescribed medication which may need to be administered if the child became symptomatic.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

- Aprons have been removed from hanging in this area and are now in the correct dispenser.
- Microwavable steriliser introduced by management for the sterilisation of soothers for children under 1 year.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep plans are in place.

Administration of Medication:

- This was followed up with the family by management and care plan is now in place.

Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The bin has been moved to a new location by management.
- All staff to be supported inhouse and brought in line with our cleaning and infection control policies.

Safe Sleep:

- Safe sleep folder established in the Lady bird room to house all sleep documentation moving forward.

Administration of Medication:

- Care plan to be established by management with all families when child has been placed on reoccurring prescription medicines.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photograph x 1

Safe Sleep:

Documents x 2

Administration of Medication:

Document x 1

Summary Comment

Following review by the inspectorate of the submitted response and supporting documentation, the requirement for regulation 23 has been met and will be reviewed at the time of the next inspection.

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)
Persons were trained First Aid Response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)
The first aid equipment was safely stored in conspicuous positions throughout the service including the outdoor play area.

(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available to the children attending 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 fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on 13 February 2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were last serviced 26 September 2023 and 30 January 2024 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service.

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.