

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD019
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Name of Service:	Stars Academy
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Address of Service:	Newtownforbes, Newtownforbes, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 D9W7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maureen Dunne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan
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).

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Description of service

Stars Academy is registered as a sessional service for children aged between 2 and 6 years. A sessional ECCE service operates Monday to Friday between the hours of 9:30am and 12:30hrs.

The premises is located a converted semi-detached building with two care rooms, sanitary accommodation, an office and a kitchen located on the ground floor. A spacious outdoor area is located at the rear of the service with direct access from the care room at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs four people including the registered provider. The registered provider and three other staff members were present and working directly with the children.

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.

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

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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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that a new staff member had been employed since the previous inspection. The record for this adult was reviewed.

(2)

(a) Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the adult whose records was reviewed.

(b) Not applicable, as the references were from past employers.

(c) A Garda Vetting disclosure was available.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. An in date garda vetting disclosure was available for two staff members which required renewal since the last inspection on the 11 June 2025.

(d) Not applicable, as the adult had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) One staff member recently employed and working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.

provider of an overnight pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 4 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number in column (1) in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) There were twenty-seven children attending the service being supervised directly by four adults during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to on the day of the inspection.

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:

(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;

Compliance Information

(1)(f) There was no child attending the service who required a plan of care. The registered provider demonstrated understanding of this requirement.

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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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The adults working with the children spoke and interacted with them to in a kind and respectful manner. Their first names were used; appropriate eye contact and gentle vocal tones were observed being used during all interactions.

The adults were familiar with each child and their personality.

Healthy eating was encouraged and the service had a healthy eating policy. The staff members sat with the children at mealtimes and encouraged social interaction and conversations. Children's drinks were placed in easy reach for each child to access if they felt thirsty.

The children were encouraged to be independent as they managed their personal belongings and got dressed for outdoor play assisted by adults as needed.

Children's toileting was managed in a sensitive and positive manner. Independence was encouraged and assistance was given when needed.

The care rooms were well resourced to promote choice and enable the children to enjoy child led experiences. Children's emerging interests were observed and incorporated into the short term curriculum. The children were learning about "Earth week" and the theme was incorporated into reading materials, artwork, songs and music during circle time and planned outdoor experiments.

Transitions were well managed by the staff members in the service. There was a predictability to the children's morning, and the routine was relaxed, unhurried and paced to suit the needs of the children. The children responded positively to this. The children are provided with outdoor play every morning.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary and email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact.

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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 secured and managed by the staff members to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the Early Years' service.

The staff members advised the inspector that they immediately cut/chop any food that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time. Necklaces and chains are removed if a child is observed to be wearing them.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. There was documentary evidence available that indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily completed to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

The staff members supervised the children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established.

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying.

Children's lunches were refrigerated on arrival at the service.

Cleaning schedules were recorded for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practices when administering medication in the service. Medication was safely stored in the office.

Fire Safety:

The staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures from the service. Fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings are not conducted in the service.