

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D.: TU2015LH002

Name of Service Aladdin's Cave Montessori School and Crèche

Address of Service: Stoney Lane, Ardee, Co Louth A92 WN26

Email Address: aladdinscave1990@gmail.com

Name of Registered Provider: Patricia Kerr

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Part-Time	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Sessional	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
	Drop-In	<input type="checkbox"/>	Childminding	<input type="checkbox"/>	Temporary	<input type="checkbox"/>

Proposed change: To increase the number of children being accommodated in the service from 65 up to 72 children in total (to be accommodated in the existing rooms).

Proposed Number of Children: 72

Recommended Change Following Inspection: The application to increase to 72 children accommodated in the service can be approved. A maximum of 63 children can be accommodated, if all children are attending on a full day care/ part-time basis.

Registered change: Change in Number of Children from 65 to 72(Max FDC/Part-Time)

Date of Inspection: 2 7 0 6 2 0 2 4

Inspection undertaken by: S. Taaffe

Title: Early years inspector

Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address: Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.

Rationale for Inspection:

Proposed Change of Circumstance

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Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day, Part-Time, Sessional for 72 (max 63 Full Day/Part-Time) Children
Date of Registration	13 th August 2024
Authority to Inspect	
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).	

Description of Service	Aladdin’s Cave Montessori School and Creche was established by the registered provider in 1999. This privately-owned service is registered to accommodate pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis and school-aged childcare services for children up to 12 years of age. The service operates from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily and facilitates eligible children to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.15am to 12.15pm.
Premises	Ther service is conducted from a single storey extended premises located on the grounds of the registered provider’s detached family home in Ardee town. There are five care rooms in the service, namely the Crèche, the Toddler Room, Pre-school Room 1, Pre-school Room 2 and Pre-school Room 3. Three small adjoining sleep rooms are provided off the Crèche. Ancillary accommodation includes a kitchen, sanitary facilities, two offices and a number of corridors and hallways linking different sections of the building. Two separate enclosed outdoor play areas are provided in the service.
Staffing	A total of 19 staff members are employed in the service. This includes two managers who are employed to coordinate the day to day management of the service, one of whom carries out administrative duties and one of whom supports staff and cares for the children when required. Of the remaining 17 staff members, 1 is employed as a deputy manager, 1 staff member is employed as a cook, 1 staff member works solely with school aged children and 13 staff members work directly with pre-school children in the service.
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. The Inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity; completeness; and compliance with</p>

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	administrative and legal processes. The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.
Acknowledgements	The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the service manager, deputy manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.
Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment	
<i>(1) A registered provider shall ensure that—</i>	
<i>(a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.</i>	
Requirement met:	(1)(a) The requirement has been met. The two service managers are the designated persons in charge and the assistant manager deputises in their absence as required.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels	
<i>(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.</i>	
<i>(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—</i>	
<i>(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</i>	
Requirement met:	The requirement has been met. (1) The service managers are aware of the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in Part 1 of Schedule 6 and would ensure that an adequate number of adults is at all times working directly with the proposed increased number of children in the service. (8)(a) The registered provider ensures that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times when the service is in operation.

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—*
- (a) *having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
 - (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.*
- (3) *A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph applies, shall ensure that—*
a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Requirement met:

(1)(a) The five care rooms are resourced with a suitable range of play materials and equipment laid out in defined interest areas to facilitate children to engage in play throughout the day. Play materials were stored in open-fronted low-level shelving units to facilitate the children to choose and access the items independently. The interest areas include home corners, construction areas, arts and crafts area and libraries. Large trays with a range of materials including oatmeal, crushed breakfast cereal, sand and water were provided in the care rooms to facilitate sensory play experiences. The two separate outdoor play areas contained age appropriate play materials and equipment including outdoor kitchens, push along and ride on toys and climbing equipment to support imaginative play and physical activity outside.

(b) The service provides three sleep rooms located off a hallway adjoining the Crèche, with a total of 10 cots in place in these rooms. Floor beds are available for pre-school children aged over 2 years of age who require or wish to sleep or rest in the service. A rest area is available in the care rooms with soft floor mats and cushions provided to enable a child to rest and take a break from activities throughout the day if required.

(3)(a) The outdoor play areas are fully enclosed by the outer walls of the premises and by fencing and boundary walls. The outdoor play areas are observed to be suitable and secure, and no safety hazards are noted. A spacious lean-to structure is provided in the outdoor play area adjoining the Toddler Room with transparent rigid plastic corrugated sheeting fitted on top of an open-sided wooden frame, with a smaller covered area provided in the second outdoor play area. This provides shelter from sun or rain and facilitates outdoor play in all weathers.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.
A two-week menu is on display showing the service supplies all meals and snacks to the children attending the service, cooked and prepared on site by the full-time cook. However, the option is offered to parents to supply the children’s morning snack from home with most parents selecting to do so. Drinking water is available and accessible to the children in the individual care rooms.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.
The inspector did not identify any hazards that would impact the health, safety or welfare of the children attending the service. It appears that appropriate measures have been undertaken in the service to ensure the safety of the children. Examples of these measures include the premises and outdoor play areas being appropriately secured, the provision of thermostatically controlled warm water in the sanitary accommodation and at the low-level sinks in the care rooms, and medication and cleaning agents being stored safely out of the reach of children.

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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.*

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) The service managers are aware of the requirement to ensure that a person with in-date first aid response (FAR) training is at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. Training certificates are available to show that two full-time staff members hold in-date first aid response (FAR) training and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster confirms that a suitably trained first aider is at all times immediately available to the children when the service is in operation. The manger states that plans are in place to facilitate further staff members to attend FAR training to provide greater cover when rostering.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes available in the service are suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and are available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

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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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a) A record is maintained of the fire drills conducted in the service on a monthly basis, with the most recent fire drill documented as having taken place on 26/06/2024.

(b) Records are available showing that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 23/02/2024 and the smoke detection system is certified as having been serviced on 27/02/2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire are displayed in the premises.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Requirement met:

The registered provider has insurance cover in place for 65 pre-school children attending the service on a full day care basis. The policy shows that the service is insured until 27/03/2025.

An insurance quotation to increase the number of pre-school children covered in the early years service's insurance policy to 72 children, dated 11/06/2024, is available in the service. The registered provider must ensure that adequate insurance is in place prior to the commencement of the proposed change, should the number of children exceed 65. The change approval is contingent on the registered provider's compliance with Regulation 28.

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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) of sound and stable structure,
- (b) safe and secure,
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(a) The premises appears to be in satisfactory condition and appropriately maintained.

(b) The service is appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access.

The outdoor play areas are secured with latched gates and doors when children are playing outdoors.

(c)

Lighting

- The premises is adequately lit by means of natural lighting supplemented by artificial lighting.

Heating

- The service is heated by means of a gas fired central heating system in addition to infrared heating panels in place in the ceiling of the nappy changing area adjoining the Toddler Room and the Crèche.

Ventilation

- Ventilation in the care rooms is provided by means of openable windows and trickle vents. Mechanical ventilation is provided in the sanitary accommodation off the Crèche and the Toddler Room.

(d) The premises is in a clean condition and appears to be in a satisfactory state of repair.

(e) The service is equipped with adequate sanitary facilities for the increased proposed total number of 72 children.

- There are 7 toilets and 7 wash hand basins provided for use by children in the service.
- Three nappy changing mats with accompanying wash hand basins are provided in the service.
- Three toilets and accompanying wash hand basins are provided for use by staff members.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1) There is adequate clear floor space available for the safety, play and movement of the increased number of 72 pre-school children proposed to attend the service.

(2) The minimum space regulatory requirement can be met for the increased number of 72 pre-school children proposed to be accommodated in the service. The registered provider is aware of the minimum clear floor space requirements as specified in Schedule 7.

- The clear floor space in the Crèche (identified as Classroom 4 on plans submitted by the registered provider) measures 31.1 square metres and the adjoining ball pit room (also identified as Classroom 4 on the submitted plans) measures 11.3 square metres. The combined floor space of 42.4 square metres meets the space requirements for a maximum of 12 pre-school children aged 0 - 1 year being accommodated in this room on a part-time or on a full day care basis.
- The clear floor space in the Toddler Room (identified as Classroom 2 on plans submitted by the registered provider) measures 23.6 square metres. This meets the space requirements for a maximum of 10 pre-school children aged 2 - 3 years being accommodated in this room on a part-time or on a full day care basis.
- The clear floor space in the Pre-school Room 1 (identified as Classroom 1 on plans submitted by the registered provider) measures 31.3 square metres and the adjoining role play room (also identified as Classroom 1 on the submitted plans) measures 9.2 square metres. The combined floor space of 40.5 square metres meets the space requirements for a maximum number of 17 pre-school children aged 3 - 6 years attending the service on a part-time or on a full day care basis, or 22 children aged 3 - 6 years attending on a sessional basis.
- The clear floor space in the Pre-school Room 2 (identified as Classroom 5 on plans submitted by the registered provider) measures 30 square metres.

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This meets the space requirements for a maximum number of 13 pre-school children aged 3 - 6 years attending the service on a part-time or on a full day care basis, or 16 children aged 3-6 years attending on a sessional basis.

- The clear floor space in the Pre-school Room 3 (identified as Classroom 3 on plans submitted by the registered provider) measures 25.6 square metres. This meets the space requirements for a maximum number of 11 pre-school children aged 3 - 6 years attending the service on a part-time or on a full day care basis, or 14 children aged 3 - 6 years attending on a sessional basis.