

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH119		
Name of Service:	Little Scholars Creche		
Address of Service:	Unit 6, Yeates Centre, Dunboyne Village, Dunboyne, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A86 A021		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Byrne		
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	11/07/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM 46
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co Meath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray		
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

Little Scholars Crèche is one of two services owned by the registered provider. The service provides sessional, part-time and a full day service to children from 1 to 6 years and operates from 7:30am to 6pm Mondays to Thursdays and from 07:30 am to 17:30 pm on Fridays. Eligible children participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE).

The service operates from a commercial building in Dunboyne village and consists of 5 care room, cot room, 2 changing room, kitchen and sanitary facilities.

The rooms in the service were as follows:

Waddler room A provides care to children from 1 to 2 years.

Waddler room B accommodates children from 1.6 years to 3 years.

Toddler room facilitates the care of children from 2 to 2 years 8 months.

ECCE room year 1 facilitated the care and education of children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years.

ECCE room year 2 facilitated the care and education of children from 3 to 6 years.

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager and 12 childcare staff. Present on the day of inspection were the manager and 10 childcare staff. An additional staff member provided lunch cover in Waddler room A from 12:00 to 2pm. The registered provider arrived to the service at 11am when the inspection had commenced and provided lunch cover in the ECCE room year 2.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,20,21,22,23,25,26,&28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19,20,21,22 & 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms name Waddler room A, Waddler room B, ECCE room year 1, and ECCE room year 2 and did not include the Toddler 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 inspector wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, manager, 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.

(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 as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) All staff files were reviewed and the following was noted:

- (a) & (b) Thirty validated written references were available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The police vetting had been sought for the staff member but was not available on file on the day of inspection. The registered provider will ensure that all police vetting is on file and available for inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Police vetting for the staff member.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 9 (2)(d) Management and recruitment.

The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was, 1 manager and 10 childcare staff working directly with the 49 children present. An additional staff member provided lunch cover from 12:00 to 2pm in Waddler room A. The registered provider arrived to the service at 11am and provided lunch cover in ECCE room year 2.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed on the day of inspection:

The **Waddler room A** had 2 adults with 9 children from 1 to 2 years. Two children were settling in during the day: 1 child from 9 to 10am and 1 child from 10 to 12am. In the morning 8 children availed of full day care with 9 children availing of full day care in the afternoon as 1 child returned to the room who had spent the morning transitioning into the Waddler Room B.

The **Waddler room B** had 2 adults with 9 children ranging in age from 1.6 years to 3 years. One child was settling in and went home at 2:30pm and 1 child who was transitioning into the room returned to the Waddler A room for the afternoon. Seven children availed of the full day service.

The **Toddler room** had 2 adults with 9 children ranging in age from 2 to 2 years 8 months availing of the full day service.

The **ECCE room year 1** had 2 adults with 12 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 4 years all availing of the full day care service.

The **ECCE room year 2** had 2 adults with 9 children ranging in age from 3 to 6 years all availing of the full day care service.

An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

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
- (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)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Staff members were observed changing children's nappies regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Older children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilets both indoor and outdoor, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.

- The staff members sat and chatted with the children at mealtimes, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff members giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- Children appeared to enjoy a combination of indoor and outdoor play with their peers.

Supporting relationships around children:

- A written record was kept in the Waddler room A of nappy changes, sleep times, meals and issues pertaining to each child as occurred during the day and this information was passed on to parents or guardians when collecting their child at the end of the day.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. Children who became upset sought out staff members for comfort support and reassurance.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) At 11:30am in Waddler room A, there was 1 child settling into the room with 3 other children who had only recently started in the service. Three of these children were sitting on a staff members lap on the floor as they were upset and the staff member was trying to provide comfort to each child. The other staff member was settling 5 children to sleep in the cot room however one of these children was very upset and the staff member had to lift this child while trying to settle 4 other children to sleep. Although it is acknowledged that the staff members were very caring towards the children an additional staff member was needed to provide support to the staff and to also meet the physical, emotional and social need of each individual child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) An extra staff member has been allocated to this room to ensure all children's individual needs are met and to provide support to the staff members while new children are settling in.

Supporting documentation submitted

Staff roster was seen on the day of inspection and cover staff were available.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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.

(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 (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) 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.

Compliance Information

1(b) Adequate facilities for rest were provided in the service for the number and age range of children attending. A cot room off the Waddler room A had 5 standard cots and the older children were facilitated to sleep on stackable beds in the Waddler B and the Toddler rooms. All cots were observed to be in good condition with appropriately fitting mattresses. Within all care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats and cushion should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the day.

(3)(a) There was a fully enclosed outdoor play area provided to the rear of the premises with a secure door. The outdoor area had an artificial grass surface and had 2 partially sheltered areas which permitted outdoor play in all types of weather.

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

- All care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, a range of suitable toys and books which were easily accessible on open shelving at their height which supported children to select and become involved in meaningful, sustained play experiences.
- The equipment in the outdoor area included a mud kitchen, playhouse, activity wooden wall, tyres, planting boxes, rockers and push along toys. The different areas were divided by plastic fencing.

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 4-week menu plan with a variety of dishes ranging from meat, fish and poultry provided by a catering company. On the day of inspection, the children had a variety of cereals for breakfast. The children brought their own healthy snack from home. Dinner for the younger age group was served between 12 and 12:30pm and the older age group had their dinner at 13:30pm which on the day of inspection was chicken with pasta and a tomato-based sauce. Cheese sandwiches with soup and yogurts was served between 3 to 3:30pm. Water was the drink of choice.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured with a buzzer system and the outdoor space was enclosed and secured. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a daily basis.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- Liquid soap, paper hand towel was available at the sinks in the sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- A thermometer was available in the cot room off the Waddler room A to ensure the temperature of the room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰ C while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log on each child recording the position, colour and breathing pattern was recorded at 10 minutes intervals.
- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The temperature of the water in the nappy changing room of the Waddler room A and in the children toilets upstairs were cold to touch and not adequate for effective hand washing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. A water filter was fitted on the 7th July 2023, there was no running hot water since it was installed. The company was contacted and the issue was resolved the next day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of a water temperature reading of 40.6°C which is acceptable for effective hand washing.

Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliance for Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 27/06/2023.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on 10/11/2022. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 27/04/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 73 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2023 to 27/03/2024.