

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN049
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Name of Service:	St. Michael's Little Scholars Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Tullymichaelmartin, Donaghmoyne, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 A312
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Name of Registered Provider:	Therese Murnaghan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	A M Cunningham
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
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Description of service

This service operates from one care room in a community building. A sessional service operates in the morning and full day care in the afternoon. The service caters for a maximum of 22 preschool children aged 2–6 years. A service is also provided to school aged children in the afternoon. The service partakes in the ECCE scheme Monday Friday from 9.30am – 12.30 pm. There is on road parking directly outside the building for drop off and collection. The service accesses the adjacent school playground for an outdoor play area.

Staffing

Eight staff members are employed in the service. Administrative support is available when required and was present on the day of inspection.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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, 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

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.

Nine staff files were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Eighteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for nine staff. 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 3 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction 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.

(6A) One staff member was providing AIM support.

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) (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) On the morning of the inspection the following adult to child ratios were observed.

The Pre School room had 14 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 4 years 11 months years being cared for by 5 staff members. An additional staff member came in at 12midday and a second at 13.30pm.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster presented to the Early Years Inspectors after the inspection had commenced the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred. The staff members were observed to be caring and attentive in their interactions with the children, responding meaningfully to the children's verbal and non-verbal cues and providing praise and encouragement using gentle tones of voice.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance if required.
- All children engaged in outdoor play on the day of inspection and were observed happily selecting their preferred play materials and activities.
- Regular hand washing practices were observed throughout the morning as children washed hands before snack after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other and this was particularly evidenced by the positive regard shown by the children and staff members towards children with additional communication needs in the service.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of soft seating/mats were available if a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Stackable beds were available if a child wished to sleep.

(4) An outdoor area was available in the adjacent school. This area was not used on the day of inspection.

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

The pre-school room was equipped with low level child sized tables and chairs. Low level open shelving and tables ensured equipment and materials were easily accessible to the children. Soft mats and cushions were available in the rest areas for the children. Other materials included crayons, paper, art and craft materials for cutting and sticking, sand table, blackboard, dolls and buggies, dress up clothes, home corner area, natural and open-ended materials, dolls, cars, tracks, and building blocks. Children’s artwork was noted displayed in the room.

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-menu plan with a selection of meals ranging from meat and poultry with a variety of snacks. The main meals are sought from an outside catering company and heated in the service. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis, breakfast was available from 7.45am to 9:15am consisting of a choice of cereals and toast or pancakes. At 11am children have a snack that they take in from home. The main meal of the day was served for the children at 13.15pm which was creamy chicken pasta and garlic bread. At 15.00hrs when the school aged children come in all the children are served a hot meal. Sweet chicken and rice was served on the day of inspection. Water was the drink of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care room.

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 to the preschool was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the preschool. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises appeared clean and cleaning schedules were available.

Administration of Medication:

Written parental consent for the administration of medication, including temperature reducing medication was required for each child attending the service.

Fire Safety:

Staff were familiar with the safe evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency occurring in the service and all fire exits were unobstructed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

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 persons had up to date First Aid Responders course and were 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill was 18th September 2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers serviced November 2023 and smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 25th January 2024.
- (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 40 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.