

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY061
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Name of Service:	Little Haven Education Centre
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Address of Service:	Syngfield Business Park, Syngfield, Birr, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R42 DX81
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Bergin
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	97	PM	67
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	D Molloy
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 Haven Education Centre is located in Syngfield Business Park outside the town of Birr in rural County Offaly.

The service is owned and operated privately.

The service operates as a full day care service, part time and sessional service that can cater for up to 145 preschool children. The age range of children currently enrolled in the service is 1 years to 6 years of age. A full day care service is registered to operate from 7.15am to 6.15pm. The sessional service operates each morning from 9.30am to 12.30md. Little Haven Education Centre has been in operation since 2004. The service operates over two floors and offers a large, enclosed play facility which can be accessed from the playrooms.

On the ground floor there is a lobby and entrance hallway, reception area, store room, kitchen and dining room, toddler room, toddler sleep room, toddler changing room and W/C and wash hand basins and, back office. In addition, on this floor there is the junior playroom 1, junior play room 2, junior sleep room, one adult toilet and five children's toilets. On the first floor there is a staff room and two adult toilets, senior preschool room 1, senior preschool room 2, the Montessori room 1 and 2, the rest /chillout room the jungle room for indoor play, a room for school aged children and an interactive /rest room for older children. There are also ten toilets and wash hand basins for children's use on this floor and a fire exit stairwell.

Staffing

Twenty-one staff members in addition to the registered provider, and administration staff who were not working directly with the preschool children were in the service on the day of inspection. Four staff members were working under the AIM scheme.

The registered provider was not part of the staff compliment and was the person in charge and facilitated the inspection. All staff members who were working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

The scope of the inspection included Play Room 1, the sanitary accommodation, nappy changing facilities, and the outdoor play facility.

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 registered provider who is the 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was present during the inspection and facilitated the inspection and the roster showed that at all times the registered provider was present during the opening hours of the service.
- (2)
- All staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.
- (a) (b)Validated references from staff members’ past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review.
- (b)Validated references from reputable sources were available for review
- (c) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána dated within the past three years in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all-staff members was available for review.
- (d) Police vetting from other police authorities was available as was required for all staff members as was required
- (3)

Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

All employees held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)

Not applicable.

(6A) Four staff members were working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day of inspection

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)

The registered providers ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children throughout the opening hours of the service.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained and records showed that the adult child ratio was maintained in the service.

(8)

(a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times, this was reflected in the staff rosters

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered providers had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person

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

Adults were fully engaged in the care of the children and demonstrated warmth and kindness. It was observed that the care practices were natural and spontaneous, with staff picking up children who needed affection and giving hugs and words of comfort.

Staff remained constant and children could expect the same adult to care for them each day and could form relationships with their carers. Infants nappies were changed as required and nappy changing was observed to be interactive and a pleasant experience for the infants. Staff were down on the floor with the younger children.

Children were offered sleep as their needs required and adults remained in the rooms with sleeping children.

It was observed that a calm, relaxed atmosphere prevailed as children slept and rested and took afternoon naps.

Supporting Relationships.

Parents receive updates on their own children's progress including discussion at daily hand over times, where parents have opportunity to meet with staff. An open-door policy was in place and parents could enter the setting at drop off and collection times and can avail of meetings on a one-to-one basis with the manager if they so wish.

Children were relaxed in the staff company and staff were familiar with the children's family and conversations about home were heard which linked the child's home world to the world of the early years setting.

Siblings were facilitated to meet and play together during the day and staff were noted explaining to individual children when their younger brother or sister had gone down for a nap to keep them informed about their siblings day .

Physical and Material Environment

The setting was well maintained and was laid out in a child centred manner. The pre-school rooms were bright and cheerfully decorated and laid out to meet the needs of the children. The rooms were well stocked with a variety of good quality, developmentally appropriate toys and equipment were within easy reach of the children in areas of special interest .

The service was observed to foster an environmentally friendly approach and had recently introduced a "Dream Green Club " whereby the setting is in the process of reducing their need for power by fitting solar panels on the roof and adding a car charging station.

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

Children availing of sessional service brought in their own snacks from home in line with the healthy eating policy. These were stored in the fridge prior to consumption.

The service had a designated cook and meals were prepared and cooked on site each day. Children could have breakfast on arrival. On the day of inspection the main meal was chicken curry and rice and vegetables, fresh fruit sandwiches and yogurt were served for snack. A three-week menu was in place and was on display. Children's portions were suitable size and additional helpings were available if needed.

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:

Child height hand rails were in place on the stairs and preschool children were supervised by adults when using the stairs.

Access to the kitchen and storage areas was restricted.

Refuse bins were stored away from play area and were inaccessible to children.

Cleaning, sanitising products and equipment were stored in a designated locked cupboard out of reach of children.

A pest control system was in place and was monitored and recorded to safeguard against pests.

Infection Control:

Staff were familiar with the infection control policy which had been devised for the service. Parents had been issued with an up-to-date copy. The service was clean and well maintained and a regular and deep cleaning rota was in place and available on display. Children were observed washing their hands regularly and adults were observed reminding children and offering assistance if necessary.

Nappy changing was observed to be carried out correctly with care to preserve infection control.

The service was well ventilated with openable windows and an air purification system was in place.
Childrens soothers were individually labelled and stored dry in containers.
Drinking mugs and sippy cups were also labelled for individual use .

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medication management policy had been devised and was available in the service.
Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication and correct storage of medicines.
No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

The two designated sleeping rooms were within easy access of the playrooms and were both used on the day of inspection. Temperatures were monitored in the rooms, and both were well ventilated.
Sleeping children were monitored and a record of sleep checks were maintained. It was observed that an adult were present in the sleeping room while children were sleeping .
Rest areas were available in the play rooms for children’s use.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.
A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point in front of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings were not conducted from the service.

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)
Staff had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available in the service at all times

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
- (b) an employee, and
- (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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 carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on December 17, 2023.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced February 17 2023, and fire equipment was also checked on February 17, 2023 .

(2)

The record was available open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.

(3)

The registered provider stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service was available in the service.

The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to information as was required for completion of the inspection.