

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY037				
Name of Service:	Little Angel's Pre-School				
Address of Service:	Ursuline Convent Primary School, Thurles, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E41 PE82				
Name of Registered Provider:	Teresa Shanahan , Teresa Treacy				
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	13/02/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>17</td> <td>PM</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	AM	17	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney				
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 was established to provide care and education to children aged 2 – 6 years old. A registered school aged service is also provided.

The service operates Monday to Friday, 9am – 1pm for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service from 9am to 12pm funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a single storey, detached building in the grounds of a primary school in the town of Thurles in north Tipperary. The children have access to their room and to the facilities of the school such as the hall, library and sensory garden. The children have access to several outdoor play areas on the site.

This is a sister service to Elm Tree Preschool in Leugh, Thurles.

Staffing

The service has two registered providers: one of whom works directly with the children on a daily basis in this service while the second registered provider works in the sister service in Leugh. There are two staff employed in the service to work with the children including one member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). The AIM worker was not present on the day of inspection. A childcare student on work experience also works in the service.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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

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

The staff files of one member of staff and a childcare student who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 17 June 2021 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. Staff files of other staff were reviewed previously and found to be compliant.

(2)(a) Written, validated past employer references were available in respect of the member of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of the student.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of both staff and relevant records were held on file.

(d) Not applicable as staff had not lived outside the state.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 on the national qualifications framework. The childcare student on work experience in the service was engaged in studies towards a level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education. The student was supervised while working with the children in the service.

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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 17 children aged between 3 and 5 years old being supervised by 2 staff on the morning of the inspection. By 12.30pm there were 4 children present who attended on a part-time basis being supervised by 2 staff. A childcare student on work experience was also present in the service but not included in the adult to child ratios.*
- (2)(4) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the regulatory requirements of 1:11 during the morning session and 1:8 in the afternoon.*
- (8)(c) There were at least 2 staff present at all times while the service was 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 (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)(a) The children had access to their activity room on a daily basis as well as time-tabled access to the school hall and library each week. The children enjoyed outdoor play on a daily basis in one of several outdoor areas within the school grounds.

The activity room was used exclusively by the service and consisted of a bright rectangular room, accessed from the entrance door through a lobby area. The room had long, openable windows along one wall and small windows high in the opposite wall which filled the room with natural light.

The room was laid out in a number of defined interest area which included a cosy corner, art area, home corner, tabletop activities and dining area, small world areas and construction areas.

(b) The children could rest, relax and play quietly in the cosy area at any time during the day. Children rarely slept while attending the service. Cushions and blankets were available for the children to use in the cosy area if they wanted to sleep.

(3)(a) The area used by the children for outdoor play on the day of inspection was the Junior infants yard which they shared with the Junior infants class in the school though both groups used the space at separate times. This was an area in a sheltered space between the school buildings at one side of the school courtyard. The area was bounded on three sides by the outside walls of three buildings with the open side sectioned off from the rest of the enclosed courtyard by a moveable temporary barrier. The ground surface was tarmacadam.

Other outdoor spaces that the children had access to included, the sensory garden which they shared with the school children on a timetabled basis, the tennis courts and the sports fields. A new outdoor area was being developed in the green space directly outside the services activity room. This space had a roof made of solar panels and was open at the sides. The ground surface, which was due to be laid shortly, would be soft fall. When finished, it was proposed that the children in the service will have weekly access to this space on a timetabled basis.

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 service was well resourced with furniture, toys and equipment suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service and to the number of children present at any one time.

There were child sized tables and chairs in the centre of the room where the children engaged in tabletop activities and ate their lunch and snacks. Furniture such as low-level shelving units and the play kitchen were used to create designated play spaces, for example the mobile book unit and a set of low shelves were used to mark the cosy area.

Toys and materials were displayed in a manner which enabled the children to clearly see what they wanted to play with and to access it independently.

Toys and equipment available in the Junior infants yard included wall mounted sensory activities and sound making equipment such as colanders, pots, pans and utensils to hit them with, a mud kitchen, wall mounted blackboards with chalk, balls and large plastic connecting shapes for construction.

Each outdoor area presented different play opportunities to the children such as digging and climbing equipment in the sensory garden and running or free movement space and organised games in the tennis courts and sports fields.

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 healthy eating policy which they supported parents to engage with and adhere to. All foods eaten by the children while attending the service were supplied by their parents. Children brought a packed lunch to eat in the morning and children attending for longer than 3.5 hours brought a snack to eat in the afternoon. All children brought drink bottles of water or squash which they could access at any time during the day when they wanted a drink. Bottles were refilled with water as needed.

Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes, fromage frais, smoothies, chicken and noodles, bananas, mandarins and strawberries.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

Compliance Information

(1) Staff were responsible for recording the children's daily arrival and departure times in the attendance register designed for that purpose.

(3)(a) The entrance door to the service was kept secured and entry to the service was managed by the registered provider who ensured that only those who should have access to the service were admitted.

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 registered provider who worked in the service as the person in charge held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box in the activity room, stored in a drawer of the filing cabinet where it could be easily accessed when required. The first aid box was taken outside when the children were playing outdoors so that it would be on hand if required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 17 January 2024.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in July 2023 . The smoke alarm system was serviced by an electrician on a quarterly basis, most recently on 1 February 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance for up to 22 early years children valid until 27 March 2024.