

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY038				
Name of Service:	Little Einstein's Preschool & Afterschool				
Address of Service:	The Old Convent School, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E53 KO63				
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Bolger				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time				
Date of Inspection:	25/07/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>28</td> <td>PM</td> <td>28</td> </tr> </table>	AM	28	PM	28
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh				
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 full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school aged care service was also provided. The service operates Monday to Friday, 7am to 6pm for 49 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children which operates Monday to Friday 9am to 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from rooms in a three-storey building that was formerly a convent. The service is located on the ground floor of the premises. The rest of the building was recently developed for residential use. Access to the premises is through a secured door into the service, from an entrance lobby, which is managed by the staff in the service. The service consists of three activity rooms, sleep/rest room, office, sanitary accommodation areas and two enclosed outdoor play areas.

This is one of two services operated by the registered provider, the other service being Clever Clogs, Dunkerrin, Co. Offaly.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis but is available to call on when required and is present in the service on most days. There are two staff who are in charge on a daily basis. There are a total of ten staff employed in the service including staff who work directly with the children, management staff and cleaning staff.

Staff who work directly with the children hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

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)(3)(8), 15(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of the Preschool Child

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 persons in charge, 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 files of all staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of ten members of staff.

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

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were kept on file. The service had a process in place to ensure that staff were re-vetted on a three yearly basis.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of staff who had lived outside the state.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore 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) There were 28 children aged between 2 and 5 years old attending on a part-time or full day care basis present in the service on the day of inspection being supervised by 4 staff between two rooms. There were 2 additional staff working with the 21 school aged children who were also present in the service. The service manager was available to provide relief in the rooms if required.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the required ratio for the duration of the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A sample of six registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under part (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) The registration forms were available for inspection onsite by 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-

(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)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The children who were preparing to start primary school at the end of August were transitioned from the early years rooms to the rooms used by school aged children over the summer months. The children had the choice where they spent their time with eight children preferring to stay with the older children on the day of inspection. The tables in the room used by the early years children were configured into one long table for dinner time so that the children could sit together in family dining style for mealtimes. Children washed their hands before eating. The staff sat with the children and helped as required. A hot meal was served in the middle of the day during the summer months. Food was cooked in the sister service in Dunkerrin and transported to Roscrea each day.

There was a small room beside the activity room which was set up with camp beds where children could rest or sleep during the day according to their individual needs for rest and sleep.

The children brought individual drink bottles that were kept on a low shelf where the children could access them as required during the day. There was also a jug of water and cups available that the children could access as desired.

The staff were observed to be responsive to the children's needs and interests. The planned activities were based on the children's emerging interests such as a focus on emergency services. On the day of inspection the younger children were watching a short video of a fire engine heading to an emergency, then coloured pictures of fire engines.

The atmosphere in the rooms was warm and friendly, the children were observed to be fully engaged in activities of choice and lively chat with their friends and the staff who sat and worked with them.

There was a birthday celebration for one of the children after dinner. Children and staff sang 'happy birthday' and shared the birthday cake that had been supplied by the child's parents. Staff said that they celebrated each child's

birthday. Parents were requested to send in a cake or goody bags for the children in the room. Photos were taken of the child who was celebrating their birthday to send to their parents.

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 arrival and departure times of the children in attendance registers designed for that purpose.

(3)(a) The persons in charge met all visitors to the service at the entrance door before allowing them to enter the service as appropriate.

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) There were six staff employed in the service who held current certification in first aid response (FAR), four of whom were present in the service on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on a shelf in each activity room.

(b) The first aid boxes were 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 firefighting 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 24 June 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 annually, most recently on 13 September 2023. The smoke alarm system and emergency lighting system were serviced bi-annually, most recently on 28 February 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were displayed on the walls throughout 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 80 children attending at any one time valid until 27 March 2025.