

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH006
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Scholars
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Coolmona, Moydrum, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	N37 PD89
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Deirdre Healy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	06/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	35	PM	10
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. O' Connor Hughes
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

The service operates on a part time basis Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 13:00. The service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme to children aged between 3– 6 years.

The premises consists of a purpose-built single storey building with two pre-school rooms, namely the Superstars and Bright sparks rooms and an entrance lobby to the service. There is an outdoor play area and a sheltered outdoor section on site.

### Staffing

There are six adults employed in the service. The registered provider and four adults were working directly with the children on the 6 June 2025.

### 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.

Regulation 8 Change in circumstance

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)

Regulation 21- Equipment and Materials

Regulation 22- Food and drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and out and record of attendance (1)(3)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of Information to Agency

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 II - Registration and Register

#### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider informed the TUSLA registration office in respect of a change in circumstance in creating a limited company on the 28 June 2024. This change was accepted by the registration office.

### 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.*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A person in charge was available in the service. A deputy person was available if required.

(b)

The registered provider facilitated the inspection.

Seven staff files were reviewed including the registered provider. The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Twelve written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the six staff members. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the seven staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members 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.

## 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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were thirty-five children attending the service supervised directly by six adults in the morning session.

There were ten children attending the service supervised directly by three adults in the afternoon session.

(8)(a)

Documentation reviewed indicated that two adults are 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

(1)(a)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children from the Brightsparks and Superstars rooms were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play and gross motor activities as well as imaginative and sensory play outdoors. Transitions were smooth as a bell was used to notify the children of a change of activity in both pre-school rooms. Children were encouraged to be independent and enjoyed being selected as the little helper to give out the lunch to their peers. Children choose what activity they wish to participate in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area, supervised by staff members.

The staff members were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff members used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Staff members sat with children at mealtimes encouraging conversations and interactions. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff members. Access and inclusion plans were available for children requiring extra support and supervision. Children were assisted with their individual care needs in a positive caring manner by staff members.

The pre-school rooms were bright and colourful with children's artwork and posters displayed including "Summer has arrived". A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters. Areas of interest included a home area, dress up and a construction area. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest area in the Superstars room during circle time.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. Parents were observed to collect their children from the pre-school rooms after the ECCE session. A verbal handover was provided to parents at this time. A parent notice board is displayed in the reception area of the service. Updates and information area shared with parents via a short messaging system. (SMS).

Each child has their own learning journal depicting their play and work activities. This journal is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The registered provider stated the service invites parents into the service for the annual Christmas concert. An open day is held annually for parents and children to familiarise themselves with the new pre-school environment for the upcoming pre-school term.

The principal and teacher from the local national school had visited the children to introduce themselves to the children commencing in junior infants in the school in September 2025.

### 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

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment was available in the Brightspark and Superstar rooms in the service.

### 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

Parents provided healthy snacks and meals for the children attending on a sessional basis. Lunches consisted of sandwiches, rice cakes, crackers, yoghurts and a selection of fruit with water to drink. The service provided a snack for children who attend the part time service until 13:00. Water was available to children in their water bottles for snacks. A potable water station was in place for children playing outside to self-serve when required. A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

## 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 service was secure. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival.

##### Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were in place and maintained in the pre-school rooms and in the communal areas. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. Windows were open to ventilate the sanitary accommodation and pre-school rooms.

Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Hand washing for children was facilitated before snack time.

##### Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature.

Emergency medication was in date and stored correctly in the service. An emergency medication plan was available for review. Nut free signage was noted in the pre-school room.

##### Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the outdoor play area.

### 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*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

A visitor log for the service was available for review with the following details included.

- Date.
- Person's name.
- Contact number.
- Reason for entry.
- The name of person who approved access.
- The check in and out times.

(4)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year by 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)  
The registered provider and deputy person in charge were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)  
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)  
A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school 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)  
A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 8 May 2025.

(b)  
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and

smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in September 2024.

The firefighting equipment were serviced in May 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

## 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 furnished the required information for the inspection.