

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WX080
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Oaks Academy
-------------------------	---------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Oakwood Estate, Ramstown, Gorey, Co. Wexford
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	Y25 NY88
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Paula Driver
-------------------------------------	--------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/02/2024
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	61	PM	46
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspector Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank Wexford
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. Ryan E. Cullen
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

<b>Authority to Inspect</b>
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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Little Oaks Academy is a privately operated preschool service which opened in 2010. It offers a play-based curriculum to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm and is open Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose-built childcare facility in a residential estate in Gorey town and consists of six playrooms, two sleep rooms, sanitary accommodation, a kitchenette and office space. A garden to the rear of the premises provides an outdoor play area for the children.

### Staffing

The service employs 20 staff to work with the preschool children attending the service. The registered provider and manager work daily in the service and assists across the rooms as needed. All the staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education. There is a chef and an office administration staff also, but do not work directly with the children.

### 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 9 (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 19 (a) Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child,  
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,  
Regulation 25 First aid,  
Regulation 26 Fire Safety and  
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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 inspectors wish 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

*(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)(b)

On the day of the inspection there was a designated person in charge of the service.

The registered provider was on the premises daily and assisted as needed throughout the rooms. The service had a second staff member who was the designated person in charge in the absence of the registered provider.

The staff files for 20 staff working directly with children were reviewed on the day.

#### (2)(a)(b)

There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff members file.

#### (c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.

#### (d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for the staff who had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

#### (4)

Certificates of qualifications for all staff members working directly with the preschool children were available on file.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children at all times. There were 61 children with 16 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the baby room, there were 7 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the wobbler room, there were 5 children aged 2 to 2.5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the toddler room, there were 9 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the small ECCE room, there were 11 children aged 2 years 11 months to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the big ECCE room, there were 14 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 4 staff.
- In the cabin, there were 15 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 3 staff.

During the afternoon of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- In the baby room, there were children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the wobbler room, there were 5 children aged 2 to 2.5 years old being cared for by 1 staff.
- In the toddler room, there were 8 children aged 1 to 2 years old being cared for by 3 staff.
- In the small ECCE room, there were 8 children aged 2 years 11 months to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the big ECCE room, there were 9 children aged 3 to 5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- In the cabin, there were 8 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 1 staff.

### 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)

The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection.

The routine of the children in the baby room was led by the needs of the child. The staff planned daily activities and today children were provided with opportunities for sensory/messy play by painting their hands. The room was spacious, which allowed for children to crawl, pull themselves up and walk. Children's sleep routine was based around their home pattern and nappies were attended to regularly throughout the day. Staff maintained a daily log of nappy changes, sleeps and food eaten by the children, which was shared with the parents via the services digital app. The room was spacious with open shelves, soft mats and accessible toys.

In the toddler room staff supported children's learning and development through a variety of play based activities. Children were observed to engage in a music and movement activity with musical instruments. Staff members sat at the children's level to guide a block construction activity and small world play. Children had access to a selection of play materials on low-level open shelves and staff were observed to rotate learning recourses. In the toddler room the children had free access to drinks throughout the day. Regular nappy changing took place throughout the day and staff were observed to engage attentively with children during the process. Attention was given to children's appearance with staff observed to clean children's faces and hands throughout the day.

In the wobbler room, children were enjoying listening to a story, and were engrossed in the story being told. When the dinner arrived in the room, they helped the staff member to set the table. They were offered a choice of which piece of cutlery to eat their dinner with such as "would you like a fork or a spoon?" During the day, they engaged in Montessori work, outside play and made playdough.

In the middle ECCE room children enjoyed some free play and tabletop activities. The staff promoted the children's natural curiosity by developing confidence with asking questions and offering choices. This was evident as the children enjoyed asking questions and showing the inspector what they were playing with during the morning. The room was well developed with sensory trays, Montessori toys and open-ended products and materials. Children's water bottles were freely accessible in the room.

Minor conflicts over sharing/taking turns were managed well. The staff were down at the child's level, listening, asking what was wrong and gently and calmly handling the disagreement.

In the cabin children were learning about the continents, a whole group cutting activity was observed as children were supported to use the scissors. In discussion with the children staff members reinforced the safety precautions to follow while using scissors in the classroom. Montessori materials were available on low-level open shelving units which children could freely access, promoting independence and choice making. As some of the children were getting ready to go home, they were observed to take responsibility for their own belongings and demonstrated independence as they gathered their belongings and got ready for home.

### 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 entrance to the service was secured by an electronic keypad system. The outdoor area to the rest of the premises was fully enclosed. The kitchen and staff toilet were secured to ensure restricted access from children. Attendance records were fully maintained by staff daily.

##### Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating, after outdoor play, toileting, and nappy changing. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing throughout the service. Each room had designated children's toilets or a nappy changing area. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and liquid soap.

During nappy changing processes observed, staff adhered to the services nappy changing policy. Staff ensured that they wore gloves and aprons during the nappy changing process and both child and staff hands were washed after changes.

### Administration of Medication:

Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication. Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children. Health care plans were put in place where required.

### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. A staff member in the wobbler and toddler rooms remained in the room while children were sleeping. The room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in each room used for sleep. The toddler room temperature was recorded at 20.6°C, which was within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one.

## 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 staff trained in FAR first aid available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position and was available for use.

### 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)

Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 15 January 2024.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was last serviced in January 2024.

(4)

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

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate that insurance was in place