

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016MH004		
Name of Service:	Little Scholars Creche		
Address of Service:	The Parish Centre, Maynooth Road, Dunboyne, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A86 FD26		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Byrne Farrell		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	22/10/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM 0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray		
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 Scholars Crèche has operated at its present location since 2016. The service provides a sessional service to children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm and caters for a maximum of 33 children at any one time. A school aged service is also provided in the service from 1 to 6pm. The service is situated in the Oak Parish Centre and consists of the following 2 care rooms with sanitary facilities:

The **Maple room** accommodates children from 2 years 6 months to 4 years.

The **Larch room** facilitates the care of children from 4 to 5 years.

The service has an outdoor space to the rear of the premises and also has access to a large hall.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, 3 childcare staff, 1 school aged staff member and a student who also works with the school aged children. Present in the service on the day of inspection were the manager and 3 childcare staff members.

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.

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 manager, 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.

(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.

(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 had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Six staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b) Twelve validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 6 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Four staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) Present on the day of inspection were the manager and 3 childcare staff members providing care and education to 26 children ranging in age from 2 years 6 months to 5 years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)(i) A staff roster was available in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) Three staff members had not signed in on arrival to the service. The last sign in recorded for 2 staff members was 27/09/24 and for 1 staff member 18/10/2024. Staff members must sign in and out on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(i) All staff members attended a staff meeting and were informed that they must sign in and out when entering and leaving the service. All staff members were given a copy of the staff handbook to read and to sign off on. Staff are now using a roll book to sign in and out.

The manager will ensure that this practice is implemented on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation of staff attendance in the service.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances for regulation 16 (1)(i).

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 were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Children individual needs were met with additional care, attention and supervision given as required. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement and reassurance.
- All children were encouraged to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. The curriculum was child led incorporating the themes of the month which were "Halloween" and "Autumn" with storytelling and artwork displayed to reflect these themes.

Supporting relationships around children:

- At snack time the children sat around the tables with a staff member which created a positive atmosphere for the children to interact and developing relationships especially the children new to the group.
- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

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-
- (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.
- (2) A registered provider-
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or
- shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Within the care rooms there were mats and soft furnishings available should a children need to take a break from activities and rest.
- (2)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed by walls and fencing with a secure gate. The surface area consisted paving stones.

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 care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included a pouring wall, counting stand, water and sand table, mud kitchen and tyres.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service and the gate to the outdoor space were secured. These safety measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Warm running water was available in the children's sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- A fridge was available for the refrigeration of perishable items in the children's lunch boxes

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.
- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- A fire assembly notice to indicate the fire assembly point was placed on the wall in the car park.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Children's lunches some of which contained meat and dairy produce, were stored in the children's bags at room temperature rather than in the fridge provided. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1.All lunches are now stored in the fridge. The parents/guardians place the children's lunches in the boxes provided on arrival and staff put these boxes into the fridge.

The manager will ensure that this practice is implemented on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of lunch boxes stored in a fridge.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances for regulation 23 Infection Control.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 16/09/2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced in August 2024. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 27/09/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously 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

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 45 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 24/06/2024 to the 27/03/2025.