

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2016WX007

Name of Service: Little Breeches Preschool and Montessori

Address of Service: Kilcowan, Duncormick, Co. Wexford

Eircode: Y35 KT10

Name of Registered Provider: Sinéad White

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 30/04/2024

No of pre-school children: AM 9 PM NA

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspector
Tusla Child and Family Agency
Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford

Inspection undertaken by: C. Ryan

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 Breeches is a privately owned preschool located in a rural community in south Co Wexford. It offers a play based and Montessori sessional service to children aged between 2 and 6 years of ages. It operates from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.30pm to 3.30pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a room in a farmhouse. The service consists of an entrance hall, a playroom, children's toilet, utility room and separate staff toilet. There is an outdoor play area and garden to the rear of the home which is safe and secure.

Staffing

There are four staff employed in the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge and works daily with the children attending the service. An additional person is available as a relief staff when required. The staff working directly with the children in the service, have a Diploma in Montessori Teaching, Supervision in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 and above.

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

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 21 Equipment and materials,
Regulation 22 Food and drink,
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 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

(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 the registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service. There was a deputy designated person identified in the service.

The staff files for four staff employed by the service including relief staff were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a)(b)

There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff member's file.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
Police vetting disclosures were available for 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)(2)
Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with children ensuring that the correct adult to child ratios were maintained at all times. During the morning there were 9 children being directly cared for by 2 staff.

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 playroom was well equipped and furnished with a variety of furniture, toys and materials. There were child sized tables and chairs suitable for tabletop activities and snack time. The room was homely with sufficient space for children and staff and a window seat was used to enjoy circle time. There were low level shelves with boxes labelled with photographs of the contents located throughout the room. These included items such as playdough, bricks and small world. Interest areas were well developed and resourced and included a kitchen and home area, dolls with clothes, car garages, dolls house, Montessori materials, a creativity corner and an art station set up with paints and aprons. There was a birthday wall, family wall and artwork displayed throughout the room. The children were currently interested in the life cycles and their baby photographs were displayed on the walls with their artwork of baby animals. A large display board was created by the staff every month with details and photographs of the children’s activities for each month. This was displayed for parents to see at the entrance at collection and drop off times.

The outside play area consisted of a natural garden environment with concrete areas and grassy areas. There was a covered area directly outside the room with picnic benches for enjoying tabletop activities and lunch and space and storage for changing into wellies and wet gear. There were swings and slides, ride on toys, playhouse, mud kitchens, sand pits and puddles of water. The staff encouraged imaginative free play with the children. For example, the children had created a sandy digging area under a large tree by transporting sand with their ride on toys, wheelbarrows and toys shovels.

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, and parents were asked to supply healthy snacks and food for the children to eat at snack time. The children’s lunch boxes were stored in the fridge in the playroom. The children and the staff sat together to eat around the table. Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: rice cakes, sandwiches, yogurts and fresh chopped fruit such as grapes, bananas and strawberries. Children drank water from their individual bottles, which were freely accessible to the children. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed and sociable with plenty of chatting between staff and children.

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 premises was secured. Visitors to the service were required to sign the visitors book on arrival to the premises. The outdoor play areas were fully enclosed. Cleaning products were stored out of reach from the children.

Infection Control:

The playroom was clean and well maintained. There was warm water, liquid hand soap and hand towels available in the toilets. Handwashing practices were consistent throughout the morning, with handwashing observed after toileting and before eating.

Outing:

The children go on nature walks around the local area and a school tour at the end of the school year. The area used for nature walks is checked by staff before use.

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 and first aid for children 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 22 April 2024.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm were serviced in March 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.