

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017LK501
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Name of Service:	Little Explorers
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Address of Service:	Sports Complex, Portnard, Cappamore, Co. Limerick
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Eircode	V94 HZN4
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Name of Registered Provider:	Claire McNamara
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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 privately owned preschool service initially opened in September 2017 in Scoil Caitriona, Cappamore, Co Limerick. It provides sessional care for children from 3 to 6 years of age from 09.00 to 12.00hrs for 38 weeks of the year and a school aged service is also available .

The service relocated in September 2022 to a designated room located in the upstairs section of the Sports Complex in Portnard, Cappamore Co Limerick.

The children have access to an upstairs playroom, the halla, sanitary facilities for the adults and children and a small sectioned off grassy area of the adjacent sports field for outdoor play.

The service change was a proposed temporary arrangement for up to 2 years September 2022 to September 2024.

Staffing

The registered provider and 2 additional adults are working in the preschool service and they all have a childcare qualification.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 26 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b)The named deputy person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the service and the registered provider arrived a short time later and both were available on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)The following documents were available on file for the registered provider and the two staff employed in the service.
- (a) References from the person’s past employers and in particular the most recent employer.
 - (b) References from other sources in the case of a person who had no past employers were not required.
 - (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 months.
- (4) The registered provider and the two staff had childcare 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.*
- (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) On the day of the inspection there were 10 pre-school children and 2 childcare staff on the premises. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the premises.
- (3) The registered provider has ensured that the minimum adult child ratio was maintained at the service.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

Ten of the eleven child records available had adequately detailed the particulars required in section (a)-(i).

(3) Childrens records were open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) A parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of their child.
- (b) An employee.
- (c) An authorised person.

(4) Staff were aware that records in writing must be retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no written child record available for two of the 13 preschool children's attending the service.

(2) One of eleven children's records viewed did not contain the following particulars:

- (g) name and telephone of the child's medical practitioner .
- (h) record of immunisation if any received by the child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) and (2)

A plan is in place to ensure all documents are checked regularly and for September 2023 a checklist will be in place to ensure all the children's records are available in the service and completed correctly.

Supporting documentation submitted

No

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified. This will be assessed at the next inspection.

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

Basic Needs:

Parents were encouraged to provide healthy and nutritious snacks for the children attending for sessional care. Children had access to their drinks which were stored in the children's bags in the playroom. The children were accompanied by a member of staff to use the bathroom facility as it was located downstairs a distance away from the playroom. Rest area with seating was accessible in the room. The children had regular change of environment. They spend some time in the sports hall and in the small outdoor area each morning. Photographs of the daily activities are shared with the parents daily.

Physical & Material Environment:

There was one playroom available to the children in the facility. The children also had access to the sports hall and a small, enclosed patch of grassy area to the rear of the service for physical play and gross motor development. The range and variety of play resources were sufficient to support all areas of children's development.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Items of interest such as the children's photographs /work , the children's daily timetable schedule and weather chart were located too high on the walls and not at their eye level for the children to view and engage with the staff and their friends.
2. All the walls in the playroom were overpopulated with posters, children work and other materials which created a busy environment posing the risk of sensory overload for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1 and 2.

The preschool graduation was taking place the week of the inspection and room was changed to display all of the children's art work for the parents and guardians who would not normally get to view or visit the preschool room.

Normally the children's art would be at children's level and at a minimum.

Supporting documentation submitted

No

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified. This will be assessed at the next inspection.

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)

Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed on the 17th of February 2023.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions in the playroom.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

(b) Safe and Secure

1. Trailing flexes from the electric kettle, fridge, portable micro-oven, and electric heaters were within the reach of the children. Also the electric kettle was inappropriately located on the playroom floor and the portable micro-oven was positioned on the free-standing fridge.

These all posed a safety risk to the children.

2. The fencing in the outdoor play area was inadequate to prevent the unsupervised exit of the children from the area and to protect the premises from any unsupervised entry.

(c) Inadequate lighting and ventilation:

3. The lighting in the upstairs playroom appeared dull and uninviting which may pose the risk of not providing enough light and comfort the children's activities. There was no natural lighting in the playroom.

4. A strong malodour was noted in the downstairs entrance hallway and sports hall. There were mechanical vents in place in the children's bathrooms but it was difficult to assess if these were in good working order.

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired:

5. There was a heavily stained rug in the playroom.

6. Cobwebs were noted at the exit door of the sport hall which was used by the children to go to the outside play area.

7. The small micro-oven was dirty and unclean.

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

8. There was no hot water at the wash hand basins in the children's sanitary facilities. For effective handwashing the water must be thermostatically controlled to a maximum temperature of 43 °C for children's use.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (b)
1. The trailing flexes have been hidden and the micro wave has been removed from the service .The kettle has been removed from the playroom.
 2. There is no unsupervised access to the outdoor area as ratios are within range at all times however the service will review the possibility of acquiring new fixed fencing for the outdoor space.
- (c)
3. New lighting will be installed in the coming months as grants have been received by the committee for the building. Planning permission for additional windows to be installed will be applied for over the coming months.
 4. Vents have been dusted and cleaned. The service will ensure there is no further malodours and will review the installation of additional ventilation.
- (d)
5. The rug had fluff on it and it needed to be hoovered.
 6. This external door to the outdoor area has been cleaned.
 7. The microwave has been removed from the service.
- (e)
8. The hot water thermostat has been turned up to ensure a controlled maximum temperature of 43 °C or less for children's use.

The cleaning rosters have been discussed in staff meetings again for staff to be aware of the issues identified on the inspectorate report. Water temp will be checked every morning.

Supporting documentation submitted

No

Summary Comment

The action as stated by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified. This will be assessed at the next inspection.