

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019DY004
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Name of Service:	Chestnut Daycare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Knockmaree, Laurence O Toole Road, Chapelizod, Dublin 20.
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Eircode:	D20K594
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Name of Registered Provider:	Laura Higgins
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	23/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff G. Kavanagh
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Chestnut day care is a private service which provides full day care for children from 1 to 6 years, a sessional service is also available for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from 08:00 to 18:00 Monday to Friday.

This private childcare service is one of six services operated by the registered provider.

The service operates from a purpose-built unit over two floors located in a residential area of Dublin southwest. Five care rooms and a cot room are available and one of the care rooms is used for children to sleep on low beds at a scheduled time during the day. There is an enclosed outdoor area to the rear of the premises which has an impact absorbing covering and a variety of play equipment and materials were provided in this area. The outdoor space is accessible directly from care rooms on the ground floor.

Staffing

The service currently employs 11 staff including a person in charge and deputy person in charge. There were 9 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The service also employs a chef.

The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present during the inspection.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3) and (4)-Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels.

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 25-First aid.

Regulation 26-Firs safety

Regulation 28- Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 and 23 in 5 care rooms.

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 person in charge, deputy person in charge, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

(2) The files of the registered provider and 11 staff who work in the service were reviewed.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the 24 written and validated references that were required, 12 were available from a past employer and 12 were available from a reputable source.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the registered provider and the 11 staff members employed to work 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) International Police vetting was available for 3 staff member who had resided outside of the state for six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that 11 adults who worked directly with the children in the service held 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.

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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 26 children attending the service being supervised by 9 adults on the day of 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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place. The children moved freely in all rooms – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative. Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. The service provides all meals and healthy snacks for children. Drinks were readily available within the care rooms. Mealtimes were social occasions with children and adults sitting together, staff provided children with help when needed. Younger children were supported to eat independently, and bibs were worn during meals to protect the children's clothes from becoming soiled or wet. Children were assisted to clean their faces and hands at appropriate times. Older children used the toilet independently and children wearing nappies had these changed regularly. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm one to one interactions with the children. Individual daily reports were kept throughout the day to give to parents/guardians to provide for continuation of care. Engagement with families and parents is facilitated by the daily sharing of information on the child's day. This is shared through conversations at drop off and collection and supported by electronic means. Identity and belonging were promoted in all care rooms with children's family photos, and artwork displayed on the walls of the care rooms and corridors throughout the service and visible to children. Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and were dressed appropriate to the weather. Children in the wobbler and toddler 1 and 2 rooms were placed to sleep as part of the room routine. The sleep rooms were calm and conducive to sleep. Children who had soothers were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with comfort and reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. Areas were provided within all rooms where children could rest or take a

break from activities. Children in the junior preschool room had the opportunity to take part in meditation to support rest and relaxation.

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:

General Safety:

- When the inspectors arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was securely gated restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- The outdoor area was observed to be suitable and safe with domestic bins stored out of children's reach and all outdoor play materials maintained and in good condition free from hazards.
- Anti-febrile medication and cleaning agents were stored in high cupboards.

Infection Control:

Measures were taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading.

- Soothers were kept in individual containers to avoid cross-contamination.
- Appropriate infection control measures were taken during nappy changing including the use of gloves, aprons, and thorough handwashing after changes.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and pedal operated bins.
- The children and adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals throughout the inspection.
- Waste was managed appropriately using pedal-operated bins.
- Each child was provided with their own bed linen, which was laundered weekly and stored individually between uses.

• Both the indoor and outdoor environment were maintained in a clean condition. Daily and weekly cleaning checklists were followed by staff and displayed on the walls in the service.

Administration of Medication:

• Medications were stored in their original packaging out of reach of children. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of procedures to safeguard children when administering medicine. This included getting written consent from parents or guardians, having a second staff member present as a witness during administration, and maintaining detailed records shared with parents or guardians upon collection. Care plans were available for children who required regular or emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

• Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance. Sleep logs were maintained in the sleep rooms for the younger children, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. An adult remained in the sleep room with the older children. Standard cots and stackable beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were recorded and maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

• The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis which was in line with records available in 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 service provided evidence that an adult trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the 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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 10 March 2025.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced on 2 December 2024. Smoke alarms were serviced on 2 December 2024.
- (2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed on the doors in all care rooms and on corridors.

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 the full day care service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the 40 children and an expiry date of 27 March 2026.