

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019DY007
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Name of Service:	Little Learners @ Westfield
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Address of Service:	Westfield House, Ballymun, Dublin 9,
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Eircode:	D09 XV7R
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nessa McNamara
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	07/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	21
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	T Nelson
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).

Description of service

Little Learners at Westfield is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 9 and is one of three services in the area operated by the registered provider. The service also offers a sessional and part-time service and provides for school age childcare in the afternoon.

Little Learners is delivered from two cabins, Seomra Coillte and Seomra Duilleoga, set in the grounds of Westfield House, a converted residential property. Each cabin has access to sanitary accommodation. There is a kitchen, an office and staff sanitary accommodation in the house.

There are three outdoor play areas available to the children, one to the rear of the cabins, one between the cabins and the house, and a further area to the rear of the house.

Staffing

Little Learners employs a total of seven staff, including the registered provider who manages the oversight of the service and six staff who work directly with the pre-school children. An additional seven staff are employed to work with the school age children. There were seven adults present on the day of the inspection including the registered provider, five staff working with the preschool children and a visiting drama teacher.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(4) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1) Records in relation to the Preschool Service
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j)(k) – Records in relation to Preschool Service.

Due to inclement weather, the outdoor play environment was not reviewed on this inspection.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of the inspection under Regulation 23, in relation to a non-compliance identified under Regulation 23. A response was received from the registered provider which mitigated the risk identified. See body of report for details.

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

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The full files of four staff who were new to the service since the last inspection on the 28 September 2022 along with Garda Vetting disclosures for three staff members whose files were reviewed on the last inspection.

(2) The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Five validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members employed including the visiting drama teacher. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that two adults had lived in a state other than Ireland for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(4) The four staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were six staff available to the 39 children on the morning of the inspection.

(4) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Four staff were allocated to work directly with the 39 children who were present on the morning of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Seomra Duilleoga - 2 adults to 19 children aged between 3 to 5 years old.
- Seomra Coillte - 2 adults to 20 children aged between 3 to 5 years old.

Three staff were allocated to work directly with the 21 children who were present on the afternoon of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Seomra Duilleoga - 3 adults to 21 children aged between 3 to 5 years old.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;

(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

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

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files.
- (b) The service Tusla certificate was displayed within the service and detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult child ratios were displayed on a notice board and in the parent handbook.
- (d) (e) The parent handbook outlined the type of care or programme provided and the facilities available within the service.
- (f) The opening hours and fees of the service were displayed on the noticeboard in Seomra Duilleoga.
- (g) The registered provider maintained the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.
- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) Following a review of a sample of nine records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.
- (k) Following a review of a sample of nine records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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 service ensured there was adequate and suitable furniture and equipment available, for example:

- The furniture and equipment in the rooms was observed to be adequate for the number of children in the rooms. It was appropriate for the age range and stage of development of the children in the rooms, and was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- The toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving, visible to the children, and were grouped in themed areas of interest such as home, mark making, construction, sensory, and library areas. Themed areas of interest facilitate children to have a more focused engagement in their play experiences.
- The variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development facilitated a range of play experiences including creative, imaginative and language play and promoted exploration and curiosity.
- The themed interest areas were resourced with a wide range of props, and materials accessible to the children, including a range of real-life props and materials from the outdoor environment which can promote meaningful play experiences.
- Daily routines were displayed and labelling with imagery and text was used effectively to signal where things belong. This can support a sense of comfort in knowing where things go and what will happen next.

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

The service had the following measures in place to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- The entrance gate to the premises was secured when the inspector arrived at the service and was observed to be secured throughout the inspection. Entry was managed and monitored by staff and the lock was up high out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Children were observed to handwash before snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- There were detailed care plans available for children who required specific types of medication, and these were accessible in the care rooms.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed.
- An accurate log of the attendance of children was maintained which can support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The surface temperature of the radiators which were accessible to the children in the care rooms exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. This posed a scald risk to the children.

Room	Time	Temperature in °C	Required Temperature °C
Seomra Coillte – far wall radiator	10.04am	64.5°C	≤43°C
Seomra Coillte – near wall radiator	10.14am	62°C	

Seomra Duilleoga – far wall radiator	10.43am	55.5°C	
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An immediate action notice was issued to the provider with regards to this risk to children and a response which addressed this was received on the day of the inspection.

- Cleaning products were observed to be stored in an unlocked press which was accessible to children. These posed a potential risk of injury to children. It is acknowledged that evidence was submitted on the day of the inspection that these had been moved out of reach of children.
- Children were observed to have whole grapes for the snack sent in from home at lunch time. These posed a choke risk to children.
- The water temperature in the wash hand basin used by the children in the far toilet in Seomra Duilleoga exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. A temperature of 46.6°C was recorded by the inspector at 10.49am. This posed a potential scald risk to the children.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not sufficient to support effective safe practice. Staff were not aware of where the emergency medication of a child was stored which could potentially delay the administration of the medication in an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective actions:

- Shelving was moved in front of the radiators which restricted access to the children.
- The cleaning products were removed from the press.
- The grapes were taken from the children and returned in lunch box to parent. This was communicated verbally to staff and parents.
- The temperature regulator was tuned down to the correct temperature and will be monitored regularly.

Preventive actions:

- Radiators covers are ordered and will be used. In the meantime, the shelving units are in place.
- A designated cleaning presses is in place, out of the reach of children.
- Parents and staff will be reminded regularly that grapes must be cut.
- The temperature regulator was tuned down to the correct temperature and will be monitored regularly.

Administration of Medication:

5. Corrective action: Staff were shown where the emergency medication is stored.
Preventive action: A large sign has been put on the press where the emergency medication is stored.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence.
2. Photographic evidence.
3. No evidence submitted.
4. No evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

5. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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 trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the care rooms.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School