

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DR001SA
Name of School Age Service:	Little Puddles Childcare
Name of Registered Provider:	Padraig O'Connor
Address of School Age Service:	13 Glandore Park Monkstown Glenageary Dublin
Eircode:	A96 KN73

Date of Inspection:	15 January 2025
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 40
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Duff and A. Byrne
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Regulation Manager.

Authority to Inspect

Tusla's 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 Puddles School Age Service is located in a residential area of South Dublin. The service caters for children registered in a school setting aged 4-10 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday between 7:30 to 9:00am and 12:30 to 6:30pm. The service is registered to provide care from 8.30am to 5.30pm during non-term time. The service is located in the registered provider's own home on the ground floor. There are two care rooms and a bag storage room accessible to the children in the house. There are two toilets and handwash basins for children, with staff facilities upstairs.

Staffing:

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs five staff members who work directly with the children.

Additional Information:

The inspection was conducted on foot of information received into the inspectorate.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or

- post-primary education,
- b) provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
 - c) the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspector(s) wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered provider, person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures.
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels.
- Regulation 10: Policies
- Regulation 12: Insurance
- Regulation 13: Complaints
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency

The primary focus of this inspection was to ensure that children are appropriately supervised and safely navigate all junctions during school collections.

A further concern was raised that a purpose-built room in the garden had been removed resulting in all children using the indoor space. Evidence on the day of inspection demonstrated how the staff effectively used the space to ensure children had appropriate space to eat, complete homework and take part in varied activities. Children were also taken to a local park to avail of outdoor space.

Conclusion and follow up actions: To be completed at the conclusion of the report.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.*
- (2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)

Five staff files were reviewed. Documentation available demonstrated that relevant vetting disclosure procedures were carried out before any person began working directly with the children. Garda vetting was in place for five staff members and the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. The records reviewed demonstrated that two police vetting disclosures were required and these were available to the inspectors for review.

References for five staff members were reviewed, and these were validated where required.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) *Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) *Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (3) *Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service singlehandedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance in operating the service to the person in charge is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge or the registered provider of the childminding service in the event of an emergency.*
- (4) *A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)(4)

On the day of the inspection, 5 staff members were working directly with the 40 children in attendance. The inspectors observed appropriate supervision of the children during the inspection. The children were taken to the local park and playground in two different groups and were appropriately supervised.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspectors reviewed the service's policies and the statement of purpose and function. The service also provides parents with a parents' handbook containing key policies and information on services offered. A safety statement and risk assessment is also available to all parents and staff and was forwarded on to the inspectorate for review.

Regulation 12: Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the school age service is adequately insured.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service is insured from 28 November 2024 to 27 November 2025 for a maximum of 40 school-age children at any one time.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall—*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*
- (4) A registered provider of a childminding service shall ensure that the parents or guardians of children attending the service are aware of the service's complaints policy.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)

The complaints policy detailed the procedures for a parent or a staff member making a complaint. Details included how informal and formal complaints would be dealt with including timelines and

the appeals process. The service also has a separate child friendly complaints policy. A copy of this was forwarded to the inspectorate for review.

On the day of the inspection, the person in charge informed the inspectors that there were no complaints received, and minor issues were dealt with informally.

Email communication was available to demonstrate communications between the service and the parents regarding an incident which had recently occurred.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- Inspectors observed staff navigating two school age collections from a busy junction point to the service. Through observation and discussion with staff it was evidenced that children are either collected by car or walk to the service. Staff safely supported the children during these transitions. Inspectors observed staff and children at crossroads using traffic lights. Footpaths were used to walk to the service.
- On arrival at the service the children were observed to be engaged in a variety of age-appropriate activities in both rooms. The activities the children took part in were varied throughout the day and reflected the children's stage of development. For example, children in the older room were colouring with markers, pencils and crayons, while others ate dinner at a separate table. The children in the younger group played with magnetic tiles and connectors. As children arrived throughout the day, they were offered dinner and a drink. At a later part of the day 12 children in the younger room engaged in a card guessing game activity with a member of staff while children in the older room played

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with figures, puzzles and blocks. Children also completed homework independently and with the support of the staff. Children were observed to freely choose activities and equipment from shelving units in both rooms. Children were moved between the two rooms at different times in the day to facilitate dinner time and homework support. The outdoor area is currently unavailable to the children, so staff took groups of children to the local park and playground to ensure they had access to outdoor play.