

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DR002
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Name of Service:	The Little School
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Address of Service:	The Calf House, Airfield Estate, Overend Way, Dundrum, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Marie Keown
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	19/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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	N/A
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Description of service

The Little School is located on the grounds of the Airfield Estate in Dundrum, South County Dublin. Full day, part time, and sessional care and education are provided to children aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years. The service operates from 8:00 to 18:00 each weekday. The service also provides a school aged childcare facility within the early years service. The Little School operates from two purposely adapted single storey premises within the Airfield Estate, one building consists of one large care room, a kitchen area and sanitary accommodation. The second building consists of a large care room and reception area, an office, and sanitary accommodation. The service has developed a designated and secure outdoor play area in a courtyard between the two preschool buildings.

Staffing

The service currently employs 10 staff members, including the registered provider and an adult who works in an administrative role. On the day of inspection each of the 10 adults were present.

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/ Information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) and 16(1).

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

(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

(2) Documentation was reviewed in respect of the 10 adults employed to work in the service. The following records were available for the adults:

(a) (b)

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from 2 sources for the 10 adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure from The National Vetting Bureau for the 10 adults which was dated within the required timeframe.

(d) International police vetting was available for 5 of the 6 adults who required it.

(4) 9 of the adults held a relevant major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. One of the adults did not require a relevant qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d)

International police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(3) A review of documentation evidenced the registered provider had not taken the required steps to ensure that new recruits were suitable and competent before allowing them access to children:

- International police vetting was not available for one adult who required it.
- 2 of the references obtained in respect of 1 adults had not been verified prior to the adult commencing employment in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

An application for international vetting has been submitted for the adult to the relevant country. The service will seek this from all staff with overseas experiences regardless of role in the school. A recruitment checklist is now updated.

(3)

A recruitment checklist has been prepared for all new employees moving forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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 pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 43 pre-school children attending the service during the service being supervised by 8 adults during the inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)
A sample of 12 records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspector to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the 12 records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1) (a) to (h).

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i)
The 12 records reviewed did not contain parental consent for the appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All parents emailed to ask for “parental consent for the appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency”. Emails stored with children’s files. Consent now included on an updated enrolment form.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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:

- (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)
- (h) A record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that attendance records had been maintained daily in the service.
 - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that staff members attendance had been recorded daily in the service.
 - (j) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed on the day of inspection documented necessary details.

(k) Written records of medication which had been administered to a child attending the service were reviewed on the day of inspection. The sample reviewed documented the necessary details.

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-

(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 inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff stated that morning snack and lunch is provided daily by the parents or guardians of the children in attendance with the exception of one care room where children attend longer hours. Drinks were accessible to the children in the care rooms at all times. Children were encouraged to assist in the preparation for lunch time, handing out food and drinks to their peers. Staff members sat with the children engaged in conversation during mealtimes.

Children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspector and were engaged with the children throughout the inspection. Comfort was offered to children promptly when required. The children appeared happy and content at their play and Montessori based activities throughout the inspection.

Staff supported the children to wash their hands and clean their noses at appropriate times during the inspection. Children were encouraged to take turns assisting with tasks in the care rooms to promote independence. Rest areas were available so the children could take time away from the group or rest if required. Staff were observed supporting the children, offering reassurance and praise during play and Montessori activities and used prompts to extend and enhance play and learning.

The children all accessed the outdoor area during the inspection and were dressed appropriately with coats.

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 inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance doors into the two buildings were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. The registered provider detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

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.

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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of 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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service.
 - (b) There was record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system had taken place as required.
- (4)
- The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in A conspicuous location within the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the preschool service was adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance.