

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DR001
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Name of Service:	Larkhill Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Holy Child Boys School, Larkhill Road, Whitehall, Dublin 9.
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Eircode:	D09 K104
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Name of Registered Provider:	Pauline Eady
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	25/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C.Kerrigan
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

Description of service

Larkhill Playgroup is located within Holy Child Boys National School. This is one of two services run in the area. The service offers part time and sessional childcare and education for children aged 2- 6 years old. The opening hours of the service are 9am to 2pm, Monday to Friday, following the school calendar year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider employs four staff and also works in a relief capacity with the service. On the day of inspection, the deputy person in charge and two staff members were present providing direct care to children. The person in charge arrived after the inspector and did not stay for the duration of 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 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 the following Regulations,

- Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11 -Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15 -Record of a Preschool Child
- Regulation 16- Record in Relation to a Preschool Service.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a)- Health, Welfare and Development of the Child
- Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child.
- Regulation 25 – First Aid

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child and Regulation 16 Record in Relation to a Preschool Service.

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 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
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) A review of the roster and conversation with staff showed that the named person in charge or the deputy person in charge is rostered on the premises during the service opening hours.
- (2) On the day of inspection five files were reviewed; these included the four adults present on the day of inspection and the registered provider.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that five written and validated references from a previous employer were available for the adults working within the service.

- (b) The registered provider ensured that five written and validated references from a source other than a previous employer were available for the adults working within the service.
- (c) The registered provider ensured that garda vetting disclosures were obtained for all five adults working within the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early years Regulatory notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as there was no evidence to indicate that any staff members had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) The registered provider ensured that all references and garda vetting procedures were completed prior to any adults having access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) The registered provider ensured that all adults working directly with the children attending 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children in the service at all times throughout the day. Three early years staff were available in the building to meet the care needs of 18 children who were present on the day of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratios were maintained within the service on the day of inspection. This was further evidenced in the staff roster.
- (8) (a) Through conversation with the staff and review of the roster, the registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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;

(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-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a written record was kept for each child attending the preschool service. The written records of eight children were reviewed and found to be fully completed.

(3) (c) On the day of inspection the registered provider ensured a record in writing was kept on the premises and available for inspection.

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:

(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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept within the service with the following information.

(j) The registered provider ensured that a medication administration record was available within the service, no records were sampled as according to staff, no medication had been administered within the service, this was reflected in the documentation provided.

(k) A sample of four incident and accidents records were reviewed and were found to be completed in full, with all the necessary details included.

(3) On the day of inspection, the registered provider ensured that the above records were available on the premises and open to inspection by the inspector.

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

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured that the learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the service in the following ways.

Basic Needs

- The children were provided with regular snacks and meals. This included lunches which were prepared at home and brought into the service. On the day of inspection children were observed to have a selection of sandwiches, various fruits appropriately cut, crackers and cheeses. Children drank from their own water bottles. The service has a Healthy Eating Policy, and this was reflected in the food choices on the day. Mealtimes were observed to be social and pleasurable experience for the children, at a pace that best suited their needs.
- There was a rest area available in the care room if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- Children were provided with appropriate clothing for outdoor play, independence with self-care skills was promoted with children being encouraged to put on coats and hats themselves. This promotes independence and facilities comfort in the play experience.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and respectful manner, sitting with children during play and mealtimes. This provides opportunities to support children's learning and development.
- Adults within the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and respectful manner.
- The children's sense of belonging and community was fostered within the service, it was observed that children and older siblings were known by name and greeted the preschool children while passing the Outdoor area.

Physical Environment and Equipment

- The furniture provided in the room was low-level and appropriate for children attending, with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to children, these were displayed on low level units, this nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available including mark making areas, home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, jigsaws, stacking, model making equipment, cars, tracks and books were available throughout the room fostering an interest in early literacy and language development.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment. This is scheduled but also available to the children if and when they need it. This area had absorbent artificial grass, a climbing frame, sand tables, slides, ride in cars and footballs, giving a selection of activities to develop gross motor skills.

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:

- The main entrance to the service was secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented the children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children on high shelving.
- The ambient room temperature in the service was kept between the recommended 18-22°C.
- Radiator covers were adequately secured to the wall preventing injury to children.
- The outdoor area was fully secured and enclosed with wooden fencing and high walls.
- The flooring in the outdoor area was shock absorbent, therefore preventing injury.

Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained throughout. Cleaning schedules within the service outlined the frequency of cleaning.

- Handwashing was completed regularly throughout the day after toileting and outdoor play and before mealtimes in line with the service policy.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and paper handtowels were available to support handwashing practices.
- Windows were open in the care room allowing fresh air to circulate.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications are not routinely given within the service, but staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required.
- Temperature reducing medication held on site was stored out of reach of children was accessible to staff if needed.

Fire Safety:

- Attendance records were completed in a timely manner and clearly reflected the children present in the service on the morning of the inspection. This supports the safe evacuation of the children in the event of a fire emergency.
- Monthly fire drills were completed. Staff were able to outline drills and evacuation procedures. Smoke alarms and emergency lighting was evident throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A raised wooden fence was splintered and broken within the outdoor play area. This is a potential area for injury to children.

Infection Control:

2. Children's lunch boxes which contained perishable food items were kept in children's bags and not refrigerated, potentially exposing children to harmful bacterial growth.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider has stated that the broken fence has been removed, and the wall decorated, an outdoor checklist has been put in place to be completed by staff to aid identifying hazards.

Infection Control:

2. All lunches will be placed in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider have been adequate to address the non-compliances. Regulation 23 is now compliant.

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) One staff member present held a certification in first aid response (FAR) and were available to the children during the operational hours of the service
- (2) (a) A fire aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position within the premises.
(b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the pre-school service.