

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021KE002
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Name of Service:	Early Scholars Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Unit 1, Drogheda St, Monasterevin, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W34 YX49
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Name of Registered Provider:	Suzanne Fleming
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare. W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher
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

Early Scholars Learning Centre is a private part time service located in an adapted commercial unit in the town of Monasterevin. It is one of four services in the Kildare/Laois area operated by the registered provider. Care and education is provided to children from 2 years 6 months to 6 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday from 08:00-12:20hrs for 52 weeks of the year including the provision of a sessional service between the hours of 9:00am-12:00pm, Monday-Friday for 38 weeks of the pre-school year.

Children have access to an outdoor play area at the rear of the premises.

The service is registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

Three people are employed to work directly with children in the service including the person in charge. The registered provider was not present but is available to provide support and relief to the staff as necessary.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Inspectorate 1 June 2023.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

The records of four staff members employed in the service including the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, other than a past employer, were available in respect of four staff members employed.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for four employed staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available for one person who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3)

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

(4)

Three employed staff members held qualifications in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework and one staff member was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice issued by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

7(a)

Staff members working in the service documented they had received the staff handbook of the service which contained information on accessing all the policies of the service to read and return. Regular staff supervision has been implemented and documented and regular team meetings take place. There was documentary evidence of ongoing continuous professional development for each staff member on file.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the required written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.

The content of the following policies was reviewed and found to be in keeping with the regulations:

- Safety Statement

- Statement of Purpose and Function
- Accident and Incident Policy
- Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children
- Critical Incident Plan
- Missing Child policy
- Supervision of children Indoor and Outdoor Policy
- Recruitment Policy
- Health and Safety Policy
- Risk Management Policy
- Staff Recruitment and Training Policy Supervision Policy
- Complaints Policy

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 sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least two adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1)
There were three adults working directly with 17 children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the period of inspection as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection; this was confirmed by the staff roster on display.

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.*

(2) A registered provider of a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or of 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 particulars specified in subparagraphs (a), (d), (e) and (f) of paragraph (1).

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

All records of the attending children were assessed.

(1)

Twenty child records assessed confirmed the details were completed from (a)-(i) as required.

(2)

Not applicable as the service is not a drop in or temporary service.

(3)(a),(b),(c)

The records in writing were open to inspection on the premises.

(4),(5)

Records were retained in storage for the required period.

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;

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

Compliance Information

(1)(h)

Details of children's daily attendance, including arrival and departure times were documented in the attendance record of the service.

(i) The staff roster was displayed and available for inspection.

(k) The registered provider ensured that records in writing were maintained regarding any incident that had occurred in the service to date.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The person in charge of the service stated all parents and guardians were in receipt of the parent handbook which outlines the details of the service and its policies and procedures.

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:

There were two entrance doors to the service, one glass door entered directly into the pre-school room at the front of the premises and the second entrance door, adjacent to the glass door, provided access to the rear door of the pre-school room via an enclosed corridor; this was the main access and exit point used by parents and visitors for arrivals and collections. Both entrance doors were secure and were controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. The entrance doors were accessed directly from the street and a bell entry system was in place at the glass door entrance to alert staff to person(s) arriving to the service. A door is also in place at the end of the enclosed entrance corridor and remained closed during the operation hours of the pre-school.

Further safety measures were in place at the front and rear entrance doors to the pre-school room by means of low level wooden barrier gates. A low level wooden barrier with wooden gate was also in place between the pre-school room and the rear lobby where the kitchen and office were located; this ensured the safety of the children in the pre-school from accessing these areas unsupervised.

The play area was enclosed with a low level wooden fence and gate with a bolt locking mechanism in place to ensure children did not leave the play area unsupervised and access the pre-school room.

Daily indoor environmental and outdoor risk assessment checklists were recorded and displayed in the pre-school. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the pre-school room.

(2)
Not applicable, this was not a drop in service.

(3) (a),(b)
The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)
The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period of time.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

There were 17 children attending the service being supervised by three adults at the time of inspection. The children were observed to be supervised at all times both indoors and outdoors during the inspection.

The supervision of the children was observed being well managed at departure time at 12md; the children lined up on the corridor with two staff members in attendance and the third staff member opened the main door and ensured one child at a time exited the service into the care of their parent/guardian.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 20 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(b) safe and secure,

Compliance Information

(b) The main entrance doors to the service were secured and controlled by staff to prevent the pre-school children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. A staff member was observed to facilitate entry and exit to the service throughout the inspection and at collection time.

The play area to the rear is fully enclosed by high level brick walls and the entrance corridor to the rear of the premises is secure with two steel doors. A secondary security feature in the garden consists of a low level wooden fence with gate at the front of the play area.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

(e) The registered provider notified the Agency on 1 June 2023 by telephone and in writing with details of an incident which had occurred on 31 May 2023.