

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022DY002
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Name of Service:	First Step Movements
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Address of Service:	Malahide Road, Dublin, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	DO3 YX08
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Name of Registered Provider:	William Lowre
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	19 January 2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne
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.
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Description of service

First Steps Movements is a sessional service for children aged between 2 – 6 years old. The opening hours are from 9:15am to 12:15pm, Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service is located in a purpose-built prefabricated building located on the grounds of St Vincent’s GAA Club in Dublin 3. There are two large care rooms, sanitary facilities, a staff sanitary facility and an entrance lobby within the premises. An outdoor play area is available to the service on the grounds of the GAA Club. The service also provides a school age service.

Staffing

On the day of inspection, person in charge and one staff member were both working directly with the children attending the service. The co-owner of the service and one student were also 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 – (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a), (b), (c), (d), (4), Regulation 11- (1), (3), (8), Regulation 19 – (1)(a); however, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8(1). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection was the one room of the service in operation on the day of 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

Not applicable.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff, co-owner and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The service is currently registered to operate as a sessional service 9.15am and 12.15pm. On the day of inspection, the service was observed to operate from 9am-12pm. The service was operating outside their registered hours of operation and had not submitted a change in circumstance application regarding this change.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has reverted to the registered hours of operation of 9.15am to 12.15pm.

A letter was issued to parents on the 30th January 2023, informing them of hours of operation of the service - 9.15am to 12.15pm.

Supporting documentation submitted

The letter issued to Parents dated 30th January 2023.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance outlined above under Regulation 8 has been addressed.

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.*
- (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 a named person who is able to deputise as required
- (b) The designated person in charge or the named deputy person in charge is present at all times when the sessional preschool service is being carried out.
- (c) There is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority.
- (2) The files of the 4 adults were reviewed:
- (a) The following references were from a past employer.
- one validated written reference was available for the three adults.
 - Two validated written references were available for one adult.
- (b) The following references were from a source other than a past employer:
- one validated written reference was available for three adults.
- (c) Garda vetting was available for four adults.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.
- (4) The two adults working directly with the children and one adult in present in a supportive role had documentation available to demonstrate that they 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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were two adults working with eleven children aged between 2-6 years of age on the day of inspection.

(3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times.

(8)(c) Not applicable as two adults are available within the service at all times.

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)

Basic needs

- The children brought in their own lunches consisting of sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yogurts. The lunches were stored in the fridge until needed.
- Each child brought their own drink to the service. A jug of water and individual cups were also available for each child, where they could independently access drinking water throughout the session.
- Staff offered prompts about handwashing after using the toilet, after sneezing, and before lunchtime.
- Children were facilitated and supported in personal care with mirrors at child's height and provision of warm water, liquid soap and paper towels to wash their hands.
- Positive behaviour was encouraged and supported by staff through having a good level of choice and quantity of materials to engage with, offering praise and positive actions giving children individual and group attention during the inspection.
- The inspector observed freedom of movement within the preschool classroom and outdoors, where there was a variety of opportunities to develop their fine and gross motor skills.

Supporting relationships around children

- The inspector observed the children have individual work time whereby they chose the activity they wished to work with and the person in charge, the staff member or the student were present to support with positive interactions. For example, with activities like matching cards and placing knob less cylinders in order of size and during free play time, the children were supported in an art activity of making a dragon and while playing play dough or with magnetic sand.
- During Circle time, the inspector observed one child being supported in completing their art and craft activity of making a dragon while the other children sat in the cosy area for circle time. The child

completed their dragon and then listened to circle time, this promotes the child's independence and wellbeing.

- The presence of classroom jobs with a visual aid for the children whereby a photograph of their face is placed beside each daily job, with one job assigned to each child each day. For example, line leader, line ender, snack helpers and weather helper which promotes identity and belonging for each child.
- The presence of emerging Interests noted on notelets by the person in charge demonstrated each child's individual interests being facilitated, this highlights how the person in charge and the staff member are listening and observing each child recognising each individual child's interests and needs.
- The person in charge, the staff member and the student worked closely as a team as there was smooth transitions from each part of the morning routine - from free play to tidy up to circle time to Individual work time to washing hands to lunchtime to outdoor play.
- During lunch time, the children were given time to eat their lunch in a relaxed atmosphere promoting social interaction with their peers.
- During the inspection, the inspector observed partnership between the staff and parents with displays of pictures of the children who were attending with their families and displays of their birthdays in the service which supported children's identity and belonging.
- Through discussion with the person in charge, communication with parents is completed verbally at pick up each day and by a letter issued to the parents monthly.

Physical and material environment

- The preschool classroom was colourful, bright and welcoming, furnished with low level tables and chairs which facilitated tabletop activities and arts and crafts.
- Montessori and play equipment were accessible to the children on low level shelving.
- The preschool classroom had defined areas of interest –
 - Home corner area with a play kitchen with appropriate supportive equipment such as toy food, delph, utensils, dolls, a buggy and a cash register.
 - Art materials are set up with paint, brushes, colouring pencils, stencils, crayons and paper.
 - Role play areas with a mirror and dress up costumes.
 - Construction areas with plastic bricks, building blocks, construction straws, construction links, construction connects, trains and tracks.
 - Small world play areas with garage, cars and trucks. a dolls house, a fire station and a boat.

- Tabletop activities of pegs and peg boards, jigsaws, wooden puzzles, number puzzles, threading, colour matching exercises.
- Montessori materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture.
- An emotion area with emotion glitter jars, a basket with a teddy bear, poppers, a book, a timer and a wigwam with cushions for relaxation when a child may require it.
- A couch with books facilitated rest and relaxation as needed and reading of books. For example, at 10am all the children gathered in the cosy area for circle time. The children sang the days of the week song, weather helper song, then discussed the weather and discussed the Theme of the Month 'Chinese New Year' where the children demonstrated their knowledge of the theme and the symbols related to it.
- Outdoor play incorporated into the daily curriculum for a period of time. The inspector observed outdoor playtime during the inspection between 11.35am and 12pm.
- The enclosed outdoor play area consisted of a soft artificial surface and is surrounded by a secure fence and wall. In the outdoor area, the inspector observed the children had access to scooters, balls, beanbags, hurdles, cones and hoops.
- Childrens artwork was on display on the classroom wall in areas called the 'Art Gallery' and the 'Our News Wall'.

Programme of Activities

- Children's learning and development was facilitated through a Montessori Learning approach and play-based curriculum. Learning themes in the room followed with medium- and short-term planning themes incorporating activities focusing on the time of the year and the children's emergent interests.
- Staff showed creativity in their planning through the addition of related items to the Theme of 'Chinese New Year' such as creating two types of Dragons, and themed artwork on the wall.
- Products of children's play and learning such as artwork displays were visible throughout the room, for example weaving paper fishes displayed on the wall.