

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022KE004
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Name of Service:	Shining Stars Academy Ltd
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Address of Service:	Glebelands, Athy, Kildare, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	R14 TK25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Christine Bowden
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate TUSLA Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, 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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service is one of three private services operated by the registered provider in Athy Co. Kildare. Full day care, including part time and sessional care and education is offered to children aged 0-6 years old. The service is registered to provide school aged childcare also. The service operates from a purpose built premises in a private residential estate on the outskirts of the town. Three pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a kitchen, an office and reception area are provided. Outdoor play areas are located to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

There were twelve adults present on the day of inspection, this included the person in charge, one relief staff member, seven staff members working directly with the pre-school children, one staff member that was assigned for meal preparation and kitchen duties and one staff member who was caring for the school age children present. The registered provider arrived to the service in the afternoon and was present for the feedback meeting.

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 inspection 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.

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 files of 6 staff members recruited since the last inspection 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 six adults employed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults employed in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.

(3)

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

(4)

Of the six staff records reviewed, five adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications and one adult 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 advised they had received and were familiar with the policies of the service. There was evidence of continuing professional development with supporting certificates of training completed documented in each staff file. An induction process was in place and implemented for staff when commencing employment in the service, this was documented in each staff file record. Regular team meetings had taken place and the reviewed agenda included items such as, infection control, child protection and policy discussion.

Supporting documentation indicated staff support meetings had taken place and staff were regularly emailed links to assist them with reflective practice prior to meetings occurring. Staff appraisal meetings were taking place on the day of inspection.

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 met the requirement of the regulations:

- Accident and incident policy
- Risk management policy
- Recruitment policy
- Staff supervision policy

Through a review of the documentation, conversation with staff and observation by the inspector, the practices in the services appeared to align with the policy requirements as set out by the service.

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)

There were thirty-two children attending the service being supervised directly by eight adults.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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:

(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)(i)

The staff roster was displayed and included the relevant details outlining each staff members' allocated room, hours of work, relief cover for breaks and the staff members trained in first aid response (FAR). It was also observed the staff roster was updated in real time when any changes/adjustments were required to be made.

(k)
The registered provider ensured that records in writing were maintained regarding any incident that had occurred in the service to date, this was supported by the documentary evidence reviewed for a sample size of 23 accident and incident reports completed between February - March 2024 across the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was a good variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available for the children to use and play with during the day. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment ensured the resources were freely available and easily accessible to the children at all times in each of the pre-school rooms. There were plenty of art and craft materials available including, paint, paper, crayons, play dough and materials for gluing, cutting and sticking.

The resources and materials facilitated all types of play and learning and encouraged each child to experiment and use their imagination.

Child sized tables and chairs were maintained in good condition in all rooms and ensured the children could sit comfortably for tabletop activities and when eating their meals and snacks. The tables and chairs in the younger Caterpillar room were sized age appropriately and there was a range of climbing cushions and an indoor wooden climbing frame available to the children for gross motor activity and play.

A designated sleep room with a sufficient number of standard cots was available for children less than two years old and low level beds, with appropriately stored bed linen, were available for any child over two years availing of a period of sleep when attending on a full or part time basis.

Child sized couches provided comfortable rest areas in Sunflower and Butterfly rooms for the children to take a break or read a book during the day if needed.

The outdoor play area had areas of interest to prompt the children's imagination and there was equipment to encourage a variety of gross motor activities.

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 door to the service was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

Daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed and maintained to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.

Staff members in all rooms inspected, advised the inspector they immediately cut/chop any food provided that may pose a choking risk to a child and would remove any necklace/beads if observed that a child may be wearing same.

The staff members, caring for sleeping children, in conversation with the inspector, advised that ten minute sleep checks were recorded to check the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents which were stored out of the children's reach.

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)
A number of staff members were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)

The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the service and immediately available for the children at all times.

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

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas and in the outdoor play areas.

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:

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

(d)
The registered provider notified the Agency in writing on 27 February 2024 with details of an incident which had occurred on 26 February 2024.