

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023DY003
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Name of Service:	Little Monkeys Playschool
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Address of Service:	Jamestown Road, Corner of Seamus Ennis Road, Finglas, Dublin 11
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Eircode:	D11 EK88
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Name of Registered Provider:	Carol English
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes
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

Little Monkeys Playschool is a privately run service which operates in a residential area in Finglas village. The service is registered to provide care and education to 44 children aged 2-6 years from 9:30am-2:30pm Monday to Friday. The service is comprised of two care rooms one on the ground floor and one on the first floor both of which have sanitary facilities contained within them. The third floor provides office space and is not accessed by the children. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs nine staff to work in the service including the manager and eight early years practitioners. The registered provider also works in the service in a supernumerary position.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. 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;

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required; both were present in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge showed that there are currently ten adults employed in the service including the registered provider, service manager and eight early years practitioners. The files of all ten adults were reviewed.

(a)(b) Twenty written and validated references were available in relation to ten staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all ten staff members.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3) The paperwork available showed that the checks specified in (2) were completed before the start date of all staff.

(4) Documentation was available to show that ten staff members who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

(7) Evidence was available to show that all staff have received appropriate training and information prior to commencing their roles.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. Ten adults were caring for 26 children when the inspector arrived in the service.

(2) Ratios were maintained on the day of inspection. The following was observed;

- In ECCE 1 room four adults were caring for 15 children aged 2.5-3 years.
- In ECCE 2 room four adults were caring for 11 children aged 3-5 years.

The registered provider and service manager were available to offer support in the rooms if required.

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

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs

- The service had a healthy eating policy which was implemented in the service. Lunch which was brought from home was given to the children at 11am. Staff spoke about the timing of lunch being amended in line with the children needs; if children are hungry, they can eat lunch earlier. Lunches were observed to be in line with the service policy.
- Children were observed to enjoy freedom of movement and were unrestricted in both care rooms; moving between activities in line with their own interests.
- Staff were knowledgeable of the individual needs of children who required additional support. Staff were observed to offer support to children during the inspection.
- Children in ECCE 2 were dressed appropriately for their outing. Staff assisted children with their coats, hats, and scarfs before leaving the care room.
- Children were supported to use the toilet independently with staff available to assist if needed.

Physical and Material environment

- Low level tables, chairs and shelving allowed children to access materials independently and engage in mealtimes and tabletop activities comfortably.
- Toys and materials were displayed neatly and easily accessible to the children in clearly defined interest areas with an adequate number of supporting materials which supported independent spontaneous play experiences.
- The children from ECCE 2 were observed to participate in a planned outing to the local library during the inspection. Staff reported that outings in the community are frequently used to support children's learning. This supported the children's understanding of their community and local services while also supporting children to engage in early language and literacy experiences.
- Evidence of children's art was displayed in both care rooms and children were observed to engage with open ended art materials which were available to the children.

Supporting relationships with children

- Staff were observed to engage in play with the children in both care rooms. Staff in ECCE 1 were also observed to sit with the children during lunch. This fosters a strong relationships allowing staff to encourage learning experiences and provided an opportunity for meaningful conversations and modelling of pro-social behaviours at mealtimes.
 - Children were given a verbal cue to signal when an activity was coming to an end and staff detailed what would happen next. Staff were observed to encourage children to help with tidy up time and assisted the children in doing this. One child was not ready to tidy up and staff responded calmly and patiently allowing the child more time reporting that they are still getting used to the routine.
 - Family photos were displayed in both care rooms which supports children to understand the link between home and playschool, supported their sense of identity and belonging and provided comfort to the children.
 - Staff discussed the importance of working with parents positively and reported ongoing daily interactions with parents as needed.
- (2) The service had a behaviour management policy which stated that corporal punishment would not be used on children attending the service. Staff were observed to interact calmly and kindly with the children implementing behaviour management strategies that were developmentally appropriate for example staff were observed to use conflict resolution strategies to solve minor disputes that arose and supported children to wait their turn using timers.
- (3) Staff were observed to interact with children in a kind, caring and respectful manner offering choices and support where needed.