

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023MH002SA
Name of School Age Service:	Reach For The Stars - The Arches
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Katarzyna Wlodarska
Address of School Age Service:	The Arches, Dunshaughlin, Co. Meath.
Eircode:	A85 E439

Date(s) of Inspection:	7 October 2024
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 26
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
Title:	Early years inspector

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

Description of Service:

Reach For The Stars - The Arches is one of several school age and pre-school services operated by the registered provider. Reach For The Stars - The Arches is located in a purpose-built ground-floor building in a residential area in Co Meath. The service provides care to children aged 4 to 15 years old. A breakfast club is available from 7.30 to 8.45am and an afterschool club from 1.30 to 6.30pm. The children have access to a large ground-floor room in the service with direct access to the outdoor area. There is a kitchen and sanitary facilities available. A sessional pre-school service is in operation in the morning.

Staffing:

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are five staff members employed by the registered provider. One of these staff members is an Area Manager and the other four staff members work directly with the children.

Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered following information received by the Inspectorate.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

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

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8(1)(a)(b)(c): Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies etc. of school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(3)(a)(b): Complaints;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be non-compliant in:

- Regulation 8(1)(d)(2): Vetting disclosures;

Conclusion and follow up actions:

The actions and evidence submitted as part of the registered provider's preventive action plan have partially addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection. However, the police vetting is outstanding and is being obtained, therefore the non-compliance remains concerning regulation (8)(1)(d).

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

(1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.

(2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The staff files of the registered provider, five staff members and a student were reviewed. There were 14 references available for the seven adults from a previous employer or source other than a previous employer. These references were validated by the registered provider as required. Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all seven adults working in the

service. These Garda Vetting disclosures were dated within the last three years demonstrating compliance with the Renewal of Garda Vetting regulatory notice.

Regulatory Requirement not met

(1)(d)

The police vetting required for one adult, who had lived outside of the jurisdiction for more than six months, was not available.

(2)

Due to the absence of the required police vetting the registered provider had not ensured that all vetting procedures were in place before the staff members commenced employment as required by legislation.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(d) The registered provider submitted a risk assessment whilst awaiting the required police vetting.

(2) The registered provider stated that to prevent a reoccurrence members of staff will not commence employment without all documents in place.

Summary of Findings

The actions and evidence submitted as part of the registered provider's preventive action plan have partially addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection. However, the police vetting is outstanding, therefore the non-compliance remains.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) *Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) *Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (4) *A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(2)(4)

There were 4 staff members working with 26 children. Staff were observed providing appropriate supervision to the children. This included during a school collection, when the children played games indoors and whilst the children played in the mud kitchen in the outdoor area.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service's drop off and collection policy and complaints policy were reviewed. These documents contained required information as per Schedule 6 of the regulations to support staff in their practice.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured to provide care for 36 children. The insurance was valid from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall—*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(3)(a)(b)

The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and the appeals process.

The registered provider and staff stated to inspectors that no written or verbal complaints had been received.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- Staff were observed to interact kindly and gently to children during the inspection. On the inspector's arrival at the service, children were walking to the premises chatting to staff about their school day. Once in the room staff were observed to give clear instructions to children and used music and countdowns to engage children with transition to different activities. Staff spoke about the themes for activities that they were completing and ensured children could take part at their own pace. For example, a staff member supported a child's request to complete an activity regarding volcanoes as the child had missed the previous week's activity.
- A staff member, who had oversight of the school collections discussed the various collections that the staff completed. They discussed the possible risks that were on the different routes and this corresponded with the written, individual risk assessments and daily checks that were available for each collection. A collection was observed from a local school with one staff member and two children. The staff member provided constant supervision throughout the walk back to the service and engaged with the children when crossing small side roads. In discussion with other staff members, they confirmed the risk management strategies in place with the various collections and discussed recent changes that had been recorded and implemented to support the safety of school collections.
- Staff spoken with discussed the management structure available which they used to support them in addressing any difficulties they were having. They described a cooperative atmosphere, and records of team meetings demonstrated that these meetings supported team members in their practice.