

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023TY001
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Name of Service:	Little Loughmore Childcare
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Address of Service:	Loughmore National School, Loughmore, Templemore, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41NN12
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rosaleen Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/09/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

This sessional, part-time and full day care service was established in 2023 to provide care and education to children aged 2 – 6 years old, Monday – Friday, 7am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from a single storey, detached, purpose-built premises in the grounds of the national school in the village of Loughmore in north Tipperary. The premises consists of a large activity room, kitchen and sanitary accommodation areas. The service has its own outdoor play area as well as access to the school grounds. This is one of four services in north Tipperary and Laois operated by the registered provider.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but is available to call on if required and was present on the day of inspection. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis and works directly with the children, supported by one other member of staff in the afternoon.

A secondary school student on work experience for a week was present in the service on the day of inspection. The school principal or her deputy are available to the children in the service if required between 7am and 6pm.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(8), 19(1) and 23. 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 and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

The staff files of four staff and one student were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of three members of staff and the student.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of three members of staff and the student.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all staff and relevant documents were kept on file. The student was exempt from Garda vetting procedures due to being under 18 years old.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(4) All staff employed to work directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 7 on the national qualifications framework.

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 was one adult working directly with four children aged between 2.5 and 4 years old on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider was also present in the service for part of the morning. A secondary school student on work experience was also present but not included in the adult to child ratios.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements throughout the inspection.

(8)(a) There was one adult working directly with the children and one adult in the school premises who could be called on and was available to the children when 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, and

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following was observed on the day of inspection which supported the children's health, welfare and development. Assessment of this regulation included direct observation, review of records and discussions with staff and children:

(1)(a)

The children were supported to be independent in self-care skills such as using the toilet, washing their hands, feeding themselves, tidying up after play and dressing for the outdoors. Staff were observed to provide positive encouragement and praise as well as assistance when it was needed.

The children were cared for in a small group, which included siblings.

This enabled the children and staff to get to know each other well and for the staff to know each child's individual likes, skills and interests and to support them. The children appeared confident and content in the environment.

They joined in the activities enthusiastically and expressed their needs and wishes freely.

The indoor and outdoor environments encouraged freedom of movement and the location of the outdoor play area, directly off the activity room, allowed for easy movement from indoor to outdoor activities.

The service manager was kind and caring in all her interactions with the children and very responsive to their verbal and non-verbal cues. She consulted the children about what they wanted to do and explained what was happening next. There was also a pictogram timetable displayed on the wall to help the children see what was coming next.

Staff and children sat together at the tables for mealtimes and snacks, which were relaxed social times where each child was given as much time as they needed to eat and drink. The children and staff engaged in conversations and made plans while seated together.

The room was well laid out in a number of well-defined and well-resourced interest areas. Low level units with sliding storage boxes were used as room dividers as well as easily accessible storage areas for toys and equipment. There was a covered area for quiet play and relaxation in one corner of the room where the children could rest when they wanted to. There were also stackable camp beds available if a child wanted to sleep during the day.

(b) The service manager was observed to use gentle methods to support the children to manage their behaviour and to help them self-regulate when they got over excited in play. The manager was observed to move to the children's level when she wanted to get their attention and to speak gently and calmly to them. She did not raise her voice. The children were observed to respond positively to her reminders about how to share, play safely and be kind to each other.

The manager brought all of the children to the bathroom when the children needed to wash their hands so that she could supervise the activity and support the younger children who were still learning this skill.

The manager was observed to respond calmly, promptly and appropriately to an incident that occurred during the course of the inspection. The manager comforted the child who was upset and applied first aid, while also managing the rest of the children.

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 school site was fully enclosed and gated with further fencing and gating around the site of the service which protected children from gaining unsupervised access to the roadway through the village that ran in front of the school or to any other potential sources of danger. The fencing and gates also prevented unauthorised access to the children's outdoor play areas.

The front door of the service was kept secured to prevent any unauthorised access to the service. The front door was made of glass panels which enabled the staff to see who was seeking access before opening the door to them.

The service was heated by an underfloor heating system which used an air to water heat pump as the heating source. There were thermostats on the walls which were set with the required room temperature. There were no heat sources in the activity room that would cause a potential burning risk to children.

Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. Hot water was 41°C on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

The service had an infection control policy and a cleaning schedule.

The service, toys, equipment, materials and surfaces were maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. The service manager practiced 'clean as you go' of surfaces such as tabletops and floors with other scheduled cleaning carried out when the service was closed.

The children and staff were observed washing their hands at appropriate times of the day such as before eating, after using the toilet or nappy changing and after outdoor or messy play.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication and consent forms available for parents to sign if their child required medication to be given while attending the service. None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

The children were all aged over two years old and did not routinely sleep while attending the service. There were camp beds available with sheets and blankets if a child did require a sleep. When in use the beds were placed in a corner of the activity room where the staff could observe the child/children while asleep.

Fire Safety:

The fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.