

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024FL006
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Name of Service:	Phoenix Childcare
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Address of Service:	Huntstown Community Centre, Huntstown Way, Mulhuddart, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D15 EDP8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead Larkin
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	09/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	T Nelson
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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.

Description of service

Phoenix Childcare is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 23 children aged 2 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday and is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider.

Phoenix Childcare operates from Huntstown Community Centre and has one care room which can be divided into two care rooms. There are sanitary facilities located off each end of the care room for the children and further sanitary facilities are available for staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to side of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently eight staff employed by the service including the registered provider, the person in charge and six childcare staff including relief childcare staff who work directly with the children. The registered provider is supernumerary and manages the oversight of the two services. Present on the day of the inspection was the registered provider, the person in charge and three childcare staff.

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.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, which was displayed clearly in the room.

(2) The files of the eight adults were reviewed and the registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Eleven validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Five validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that two adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

(4) All eight adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were three staff available to the 12 children.

(2) The service ensured that the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 8 children was always adhered to while the children moved from the indoor to the outdoor play environments.

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) The registered provider ensured the child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated, for example:

Basic Needs:

- Children were provided with regular food, and drinks of water were freely accessible in both the indoor and outdoor environment. Breakfast, a hot lunch and a tea were provided by the service and a snack was provided by parents. Meals were observed to be varied with a three-week menu plan in place, and alternative meals were available for those with alternative or additional dietary requirements.

- Children were facilitated to move freely through their environment and engage in activities of their choice. This included access to the outdoor play environment where children were observed to be facilitated to play outdoors for an extended period of time and to move freely between the two environments.
- Toileting was observed to be a supportive experience for children toilet training, where children were respectfully reminded would they like to use the toilet.
- There was documentary evidence available to demonstrate that plans were in place for children who had additional care needs.

Supporting Relationships:

- An online software application was used to share information with parents using a 'day sheet' where information on the child's food intake, toileting and other information was shared. Photos and updates on the children's activities were also shared on this platform. Parents could have a conversation with staff at drop-off and collection.
- Staff were observed to have respectful, warm and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as eye contact, using the child's name and being at the child's level.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and appropriate for children. Toys, equipment and play materials were easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured the children's independence and facilitated their choice.
- Well-resourced areas of interest were available, and the children could move freely around their rooms. These clearly defined interest areas included home, role play, arts and crafts, investigation, finger gym and reading areas. These areas and play props promoted a range of play experiences for the children to support their development.
- The fully enclosed outdoor play area to the side of the premises was a well-presented and resourced area. Resources available included a defined area for sand and mark making with appropriate props available. Other equipment in the outdoor area included a slide, playhouse, ride in cars, footballs, bikes and a picnic table. This environment provided for risk, challenge, curiosity and physical play for children to support gross motor development.
- Images of the children and their families was displayed throughout the room, and children had labelled coat hooks and cubbies for their belongings.

- Visual cues such as the daily routine was displayed and labelling with imagery and text was used effectively to signal where things belong. This can support a sense of comfort in knowing where things go and what will happen next.

Programme of Activities:

- Long- and medium-term plans for children’s learning were available, and these were reflected in the products of activities visible in the room. Staff reported that these plans were tailored according to emergent interests of the children.
- Documentation was available where staff reported on children’s strengths and challenges and used these reports to plan for future activities.
- Staff were observed to use effective verbal and nonverbal strategies to facilitate children’s development such as listening, letting children take the lead, questioning and recall.