

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024WX001			
Name of Service:	Little Oaks Academy Limited			
Address of Service:	Raheenagurren East, Courtown Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford			
Eircode:	Y25 D2K8			
Name of Registered Provider:	Paula Driver			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	02/12/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	20
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspector Tusla Child and Family Agency Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford			
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan			
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			

Description of service

Little Oaks Academy Ltd. is registered to operate a full day care service for children aged between 0 and 6 years of age and accommodates 39 children at any one time on the premises. The service is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday, 51 weeks per year. The premises is a purpose-built bungalow, which previously operated as a preschool service. The service consists of three playrooms, bathrooms, a sleep room and kitchen. There is an enclosed garden to the rear of the premises. The registered provider has a full day care in Ramstown Estate Gorey called Little Oaks Academy.

Staffing

There were five staff working directly with the children in the service on the day of inspection. There are 11 staff in total in the service. There was a designated person in charge present on the premises. The staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at level 5, 6 and 8 qualifications in Childcare, Montessori Education and Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 focused on the following regulations.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 17 Information for Parents

Regulation 19 (a) Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,

Regulation 25 First aid, and

Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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

(1)(a)(b)

There was a designated person in charge on the premises and a second named adult to deputise as required.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated references were kept on the individual's file for all staff.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all staff working in the service.

(d)

Police vetting disclosures were available on file for staff that had lived outside the state for more than six consecutive months.

(4)

Certificate of qualifications for all staff who work directly with the preschool children were available on file.

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)

Throughout the period of the inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children attending the service.

(2)

In the morning:

- **Baby room:** There were 3 babies in the care of 1 staff. (1 aged between 0 and 1 years and 2 aged between 1 and 2 years).
- **Toddler room:** There were 6 children in the care of 1 staff. (2 aged between 1 and 2 years and 4 aged between 2 to 3 years).
- **Montessori room:** There were 10 children in the care of 2 staff. (All aged between 2 and 5 years).

In the afternoon:

- **Baby room:** There were 3 babies in the care of 1 staff. (1 aged between 0 and 1 years and 3 aged between 1 and 2 years).
- **Toddler room:** There were 6 children in the care of 2 staff. (2 aged between 1 and 2 years and 4 between 2 and 3 years).
- **Montessori room:** There were 11 children in the care of 2 staff. (all aged between 3 and 6 years).

The designated person in charge was supernumerary to the staff in the rooms, however assisted as needed in the childcare rooms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service had a folder for parents with information about the service including contact details and the curriculum. The folder was located in the entrance hall and included relevant information and key policies. Parents are provided with an opportunity to visit the service.

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 following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection.

The three playrooms were set up to meet the needs of the different ages and stage of development of the children using them. In the baby room there were soft mats and space for children to crawl. A small sofa was available for staff to sit to hold, feed and comfort children. Low level chairs with tables were available for feeding children. Baskets of toys and open shelves were easily accessible. The toddler room and Montessori room had interest areas, open shelves with a variety of toys and materials. Art and craft materials were available. Each room had their daily routine, emergent curriculum, birthday walls and family photos displayed.

The children and staff were observed sitting together, playing and chatting during the day. Children enjoyed a variety of activities such as practicing songs for their Christmas play, making playdough, sensory play and free play. Minor disputes over sharing were managed gently and kindly, with staff observed using positive language to reinforce simple rules.

The atmosphere was relaxed during the day, with positive interactions between the children and staff observed. All children were provided with the opportunity to rest during the day, with babies put to sleep as they showed signs of tiredness. Older children were all afforded the opportunity to sleep after lunch, when sleep mats were set up and the room dimmed.

Snack time was unrushed and relaxed, with children given time to eat at their own pace. The daily routine was calm and relaxed, with the children transitioning between activities seamlessly. The outside play area consisted of an enclosed garden to the rear of the premises. It was divided into areas and included ride on toys, digging areas, and a mud kitchen.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Children did not go outside on the day of inspection. Outdoor play was not part of the daily routine.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response to address the non-compliance:

Corrective and Preventive Action

Children normally get out on a daily basis but did not go outside on the day of inspection due to the rain and cold on that particular day. Outdoor play is part of the daily routine. A team meeting was held to ensure all educators and children have appropriate outdoor clothing to ensure comfortable play outdoors.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence.

Summary Comment

The requirement of the regulation is met.

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 entrance to the premises was secured to ensure children could not exit unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter unannounced. The kitchen was secured to restrict access.

Infection Control:

There was warm water, liquid hand soap and hand towels for hygiene handwashing. The playrooms were clean and well maintained. The children's tables were cleaned down regularly between activities and eating. Attention was given to children's personal hygiene with staff observed to clean their hands and faces after eating with individual flannels. The flannels were laundered daily. Formula bottles were brought to the service premade by parents and stored in the fridge in line with safe food practices. Hand washing and nappy changing practices observed were in line with infection prevention guidelines.

Administration of Medication:

Records of administration of medication reviewed on the day showed that the practice was consistent and in line with safe administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

There was one sleep room located close to the toddler and baby room. There were standard cots available for babies and young children in the room. Sleep mats were available for older children. The sleep mats were set up in the toddler and Montessori playrooms after lunch, with sheets and blankets. The rooms were dimmed, and all the children slept. The staff remained in the rooms with the children while they slept.

The sleep room temperature was maintained between 16 to 20°C which was in line with best practice. The sleeping children's colour, breathing and position were observed and recorded every 10 minutes on the day of inspection. Staff were observed to physically check children while sleeping in the sleep room.

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)

There were staff trained in FAR and first aid for children available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position and was available for use.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The last recorded fire drill was carried out on 5 November 2024.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm were serviced in April 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.