

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS074
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Name of Service:	Headstart Preschool
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Address of Service:	Brookfield Enterprise Centre, Rossfield Avenue, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 EV96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Teresa McCullagh
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill
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

Headstart preschool is a community based early years service that was established in 1998 and is registered to provide sessional care and education to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates Monday to Friday providing a morning and afternoon service from 08.30 am to 11.30am and from 12pm to 3pm. The early years service is located in an urban area in Brookfield Enterprise Centre in Tallaght Dublin 24. Three care rooms are provided and a small sensory room is available. An outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

In total seven staff are employed in the service. Six staff were present on the day of inspection. One of the staff was employed on a community employment scheme. All staff had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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

The inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, records and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a) - (d) and (4) Management and Recruitment,
- 11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels,
- 16 (1)(h), (i), (j) and (k) Record in relation to Pre-school Service,
- 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.
- 25 (1), (2)(a), (b) First Aid,
- 26 (1)(a), (b) and (4) Fire Safety Measures,

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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,*
- (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) The service had a designated person in charge and there was a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) At all times during the inspection the designated person in charge was on the premises.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The inspection included a review of one file for a new staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on the 8 June 2022. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff employed in the service.

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Documentation reviewed in respect of the new staff member met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) There were two written validated references available from past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all staff employed to work in the service. These were dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as the new staff member had not resided outside the State for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Records were available evidencing that the staff member employed to work directly with the children had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were twenty-one children attending the service being supervised by five staff members on the day of inspection.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Details of attendance of each child was recorded at the time of arrival and departure.
 - (i) The staff roster was available and up to date.
 - (j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent was required prior to administering medication to a pre-school child.
 - (k) A sample of ten accident and incident forms were reviewed. These forms were completed correctly and signed by parents and staff.

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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 that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school. There was a calm atmosphere in the service and the routine was observed to be child-led, children were observed to be engaged in their play. All care rooms came together for free play which allowed children to mix with their peers and foster close relationships. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during their interactions with the children. Mealtime was relaxed and sociable, staff sat and engaged in conversation with the children. Drinking water was freely available in all care rooms.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their play.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be easily accessible to the children on low level shelving provided. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms. Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, home corners, sand play and books. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials.

An enclosed outdoor play area was available for the children this area was well resourced. Staff reported children go to the outdoor area daily with the exception of day of inspection as maintenance work was being completed. Instead, children engaged in physical activity by dancing to music indoors with staff.

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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 door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach.
- The kitchen was inaccessible, the door was locked.
- Fire exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- The environment was clean.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet and prior to eating their lunch.

Administration of Medication:

- Written parental consent was available should temperature reducing medication be required to be administered to a child. A record form was available to record any medication given and staff were familiar when questioned about the administration of medication policy.
- Medication was in date, stored in a safe place and clearly labelled.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The records demonstrated monthly fire drills are not carried out. The last fire drill was completed on the 15 October 2024 and prior to this date, the only records of fire drill completed were in the Month of April and January 2024. This posed a potential risk the children may not be familiar with the fire procedure and this may impede the safe evacuation of all children in the event of a fire on the premises.

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Infection Control:

2. The bin provided for the disposal of nappies was a lidded bin rather than a pedal operated bin posing an increased risk of spreading infection.
3. Some staff and children were observed to handle the bin after handwashing rather than using the pedal function posing an infection control risk.
4. The plastic cover on two-child size sofa's was ripped and torn and as a result could not be cleaned effectively.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Monthly fire drills have been commenced with the fire safety officer in charge of making sure they are completed. The deputy fire safety officer will work in conjunction with the fire safety to prevent non compliance of monthly fire drills.

Infection Control:

2. Pedal bins have been replaced.
3. Three new pedal bins have been purchased. Pedal bins will be part of our risk assessments.
4. The sofa has been removed and replaced it with 2 armchairs. In the future we will remove any items that may be ripped or torn.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in keeping with the actions submitted. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

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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) All staff had up to date First aid responder training and were immediately available at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored, in an easily accessible and available to the children attending the pre-school at all times.

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 fire fighting 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) There was a written record of fire drills completed. The last fire drill was completed on the 15 October 2024.

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(b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the fire equipment were dated the 1 June 2024 and the maintenance record for the smoke alarm was dated as being completed on the 2024.

9 October 2024.

(4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.