

TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT



TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL187					
Name of Service:	Little Scholars					
Address of Service:	Bracken Educate Together National School Castlelands Balbriggan Co Dublin K32YE94					
Email Address:	Little.scholars@mail.com					
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Ms Fiona Simpson					
Type of Service Registered:	Sessional		☒			
Date of Inspection:	2	4	0	1	2	2
No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	AM	16	PM	n/a		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin					
Inspection undertaken by: Title:	AM Coyle Early Years Inspector					

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health Welfare and Development of Child	Safety

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	Little scholars was established in 2012 as a privately owned Early Years' Service. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children from 2 years 8 months until they commence attendance at primary school. The service operates from 08:45am to 11:45 am Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) scheme.
Premises	Little scholars is located in a ground floor classroom in Bracken Educate together school in Balbriggan, North Dublin. The service has access to an enclosed outdoor area in the school grounds.
Staffing	The registered provider who is involved in the administration of the Early Years' Service does not work directly with the pre-school children on a daily basis. A manager is employed in the service to coordinate the day-to-day operation of the service in addition to another core staff member both of whom work directly with the children.
Methodology	Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate (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. The findings on inspection are based on; • Information obtained through examination of documentation • Direct observation • Discussion with relevant staff This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the Person in Charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

GOVERNANCE

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:

Following a review of the service file and discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that there was one new member of staff employed in the service since the last inspection.

One staff file was reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) Two written and appropriately validated references were available for the staff member whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure were available for 1 member of staff employed.

(d) Not applicable as following a review of the staff file there was no documentary evidence that the staff member had resided outside of the Irish state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available that the staff member whose file was reviewed held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 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.
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.
- (3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.
There were 2 adults caring for 16 children aged 3 years 2 months to 4 years 11 months.

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

Compliance Information:

The inspector viewed the care practices in the service although the time spent in the service was reduced to minimise risk considering the COVID-19 pandemic. The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated on the day of inspection.

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children bring their own packed lunch with them to the service. The children were observed to enjoy sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yogurts for their lunch.
- Lunch time was observed to be unhurried, and the staff members sat with children encouraging conversations throughout this time. Children were appropriately supported based on their abilities.
- The bathroom was located alongside the care room, the children used the bathroom independently with support provided as required.
- There was ample space in the care room for the children to move freely.
- A rest area with a low-level couch was available should the children choose to take a break from activities.
- The children were very familiar and comfortable with the staff members present. The children were observed to seek out staff members for support as they required it.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The play materials and equipment in the care room were stored on low level shelves which facilitated the children to select toys and activities of their choice.
- The care room was laid out in defined interest areas and was well-resourced with equipment and play materials including a range of Montessori equipment, art and crafts materials, a well-resourced home corner, a wide range of tabletop activities and a reading and relaxation area. The children were observed enjoying activities of their choosing and moving from one activity to another as they wished whilst being well supported by the staff present.
- The theme of the week was 'oral care' and this was reflected in circle time when the children chatted about caring for their teeth and were provided with the opportunity to use a toothbrush on a large teeth demonstration model in addition to having a story read about minding their teeth.
- The service has access to a fully enclosed basketball court on the school grounds for outdoor play. Outdoor play equipment which is stored in the care room and brought to the outdoor area when the children go outside.

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:

INFECTION CONTROL:

- Clear signage was on display at the entrance door of the school advising parents and children not to attend should they be experiencing the named symptoms of Covid-19.
- The service was in a clean and hygienic condition. There was a process in place for the cleaning of toys and equipment daily as evidenced by detailed up-to-date written records.
- The staff in the service were familiar with the processes to be followed in the event of an adult or child becoming symptomatic whilst attending the service.
- Adequate ventilation was available in all of the care rooms by means of openable windows.
- Liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins. Hand sanitiser was also provided in the service. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed during the inspection. Children's hands were washed prior to lunchtime, and after using the toilet. The children were supervised when carrying out hand hygiene.

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) A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. (2) (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service. (b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.
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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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service and these were conducted on a monthly basis. (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on 09/09/2021 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 12/04/2021 (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.
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