

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL191
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Name of Service:	Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service
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Address of Service:	Hartstown Community Centre, Hartstown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edain Johnson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	14
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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
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte
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).

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Description of service

Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service is a sessional service located in Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to children aged 2 to 6 years Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates two Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional services; 9.00am to 12.00pm, and 12.30pm to 3.30pm.

Little Sparrows Early Years Preschool Service operates from a Community Centre with two care rooms; Bubble 1 is located in a separate cabin to the rear of the premises and Bubble 2 is located in the prefab at the back of the community centre. Both care rooms have adjoining sanitary facilities. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises.

The service has recently completed a change of circumstances and is now transitioning to its new approved registration status. The service has been approved to operate both part-time and sessional care to a maximum of 31 sessional and 27 part-time children aged 2-6 years old. The bubble 2 room will relocate from the prefab to the main community centre building.

Staffing

The registered provider currently employs five early years professionals to work within the service including the deputy person in charge. All staff work directly with the children attending the service. The registered provider also works within the service on occasion. On the day of the inspection the registered provider and four early years professionals were present.

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

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- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced 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:

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

Regulation 11 (1), (3) Staffing Levels

Regulation 15 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i), (3)(c)

Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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, deputy 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,*
- (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) The registered provider ensured that;

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) Documentary evidence showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) Following a review of available documents and a conversation with the person in charge it was established that the service currently employs five staff who all work directly with the preschool children attending the service. The registered provider also works directly within in the service on occasion. The full files of three new staff employed since the last inspection were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting disclosures for three

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adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Five validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) One validated written reference was available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) A review of available documents demonstrated that police vetting was not required.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that three staff members who worked directly with the children held 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

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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their care needs.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Five staff were allocated to work directly with 27 children present.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that of the sample 10 records reviewed the following was maintained in each record:

- (a) The name and date of birth for each child was available for the 10 files reviewed.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) Each of the 10 files reviewed were of children still currently attending and detailed the expected leave date.
- (d) The relevant contact details for parents and or guardians were available.
- (e) Authorisation to collect a child.
- (f) Relevant details relating to the health and care of a child.
- (g) The contact details of the child's doctor.
- (h) The child's immunisation record.
- (i) Written consent for emergency medical treatment if required.

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(3) (c) All the records requested were available for review by the inspector on the day of the inspection.

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-

(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

(1) (b) The following practices were observed in place to support the children attending:

- The atmosphere within the care rooms was calm and pleasant. Staff were responsive to children's needs and engaged with them throughout the morning joining them in play and conversation.
- Staff assisted children to follow their own interests by creating available space for children to join small group activity and assisting with the removal of footwear and heavy clothing to support dress up and imaginative play.
- Children were supported with self-care skills such as hand washing, toileting and appropriate clothing for play outdoors.
- Children were given ample time to enjoy their meal during lunchtime.
- Staff guided children through transitions using a variety of strategies such as music and discussion about activities within their day. The children were informed of the visitor to their care room.
- All children attending on the day of inspection had the opportunity to play outdoors.

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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 to the care rooms was secured on arrival to the service, and entry was managed and monitored by staff.
- Furniture, toys and equipment were observed maintained in good condition and suitable for use.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed; the area was clear of hazards and the equipment in use was observed to be well maintained
- Staff were observed to complete head counts when transitioning children to and from the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

- Daily cleaning rotas were displayed and completed up to date.
- Windows were open allowing fresh air to circulate.
- Tables were disinfected prior to mealtimes.
- Children were supported to wash their hands before eating.

Administration of Medication:

- A mechanism was in place to record administration of medication. A review of available documents demonstrated no medication had been administered since the last inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A sample of ten records were reviewed, none of which were completed in full. The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for accidents and incidents. This posed a potential risk of miscommunication impacting the appropriate care of children after an injury.

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Infection Control:

- Perishable lunch items brought from home were not appropriately refrigerated. This is not in line with the food and nutrition guidelines for pre-school services. Perishable food must be stored in a refrigerator or cool place at temperatures between 0-5°C as there is a potential risk of contamination.
- Hand towels in the bubble one sanitary area were not hygienically dispensed and posed a potential infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were unclear on the individual care needs of a child attending the service who required non-emergency medication. This posed a risk of inaccurate administration of medication.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- All accidents and incidents have been reviewed. All staff have been reminded and guided of their responsibility to complete records accurately and in full immediately following any accident or incident. A formal procedure has been implemented requiring the person in charge to review every accident and incident recorded on the day it is completed to ensure accuracy and completeness. This will ensure complete documentation is maintained and reduced miscommunication.

Infection Control:

- A larger fridge has been installed in the new preschool room. In order to maximise fridge storage space, parents have also been advised to purchase either small lunch boxes or zip lock bags to ensure we have adequate space to store perishable lunch items. Staff have been reminded of the Food and Nutrition guidelines for preschools and have been advised to ensure lunches are stored away upon arrival of the children to the preschool.
- A suitable towel dispenser has been sourced and is waiting installation. This will be installed over the summer holidays and in place prior to children returning by the end of August. In the interim, prior to summer holidays, management ensure appropriate hygiene hand drying was implemented to minimise infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

- Following the inspection, an individual care plan for the child was established. This was developed in conjunction with the child parents. Staff have all been briefed on the child's care needs and are now familiar with the procedures to be followed. As a team we will review all application forms and implement

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full care plans for children requiring medication to be reviewed with parents on enrolment and annually if required. Management will review all records and care plans regulatory to ensure that they remain accurate and up to date. Relevant training will be sought and provided for where required.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Staff meeting minutes.

Infection Control:

Staff meeting minutes.

Extract from parent handbook.

Administration of Medication:

Individual care plan form.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under points 1, 2 and 4 have been addressed. The non-compliance listed at point 3 remains outstanding as the work has not yet been completed. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The registered provider did not ensure the premises was maintained as required. Vines were observed coming through the windows of the bubble one care room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Management have spoken with building management, and they have confirmed that the vines will be cut down. Management will liaise with building management to keep on top of maintenance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of communication from building management.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. This non-compliance remains outstanding as the work has not yet been completed. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.