

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LK002
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Name of Service:	Delta's Little Academy
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Address of Service:	Unit 1, Delta Retail Park, Ballysimon Road, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 PC86
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jeremiah O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	07/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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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Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

Description of service

Delta's Little Academy is a privately owned preschool service located in a retail park on the outskirts of Limerick city. It offers full-day care from 8:15 am to 6:00 pm, Monday to Friday, for children aged 2 to 6 years. The academy also provides a morning ECCE (Early Childhood Care and Education) session for children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years, and an after-school service for older children.

The ground floor features a large preschool room, a manager's office, and sanitary facilities for children and adults. On the first floor, there is a second preschool room for a morning sessional service, which also serves school-aged children in the evenings. Additional facilities like nappy changing areas, a kitchen, and a staff room are also available on the first floor.

The service has an outdoor play area accessible from the downstairs room, with a sheltered section to ensure children can play outside in all weather conditions.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner of the service. A designated manager is appointed to oversee the operations of the facility. There are 5 additional staff employed to work at the service. The manager and staff have achieved 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:

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- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ premises and facilities. 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 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) A designated person in charge was available on the day of the inspection. A named person who could deputise was also available.

(b) The staff roster indicated that the designated person in charge or the deputy were rostered to work each day at the service.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all staff members working at the service.

(b) References were from previous employers or from reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for each staff working at the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member.

(4) Proof of qualifications were available for all staff working at the service.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies of the service were reviewed

- **Accident and Incident Policy:** This outlined preventive measures to reduce accidents and incidents, the procedures to follow in the event of an accident, and how these incidents were reported.
- **Complaints Policy:** This detailed the steps for handling complaints or concerns from children or parents about the service. It included the investigation process and communication with parents, as well as an appeal procedure if the complainant was dissatisfied with the resolution.
- **Inclusion Policy:** This policy ensured that all children were included in the setting, emphasising consistency, equity, and needs-based practices. It highlighted the service's commitment to diversity and cultural acceptance.
- **Behaviour Management Policy:** The focus of the policy was on supporting children in managing their own behaviour through positive guidance and realistic expectations that matched their age and development. The policy aimed to promote self-regulation and pro-social behaviour while considering the social and emotional well-being of the children.

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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) The registered provider insured that there was at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the preschool service.

(2) There were 16 Preschool Children and 5 adults available in the service on the day of the inspection. The adult/child ratio was correct. Additional staff were available to accommodate staff taking time off for meal breaks.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

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- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a)* The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility. This was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hallway.
 - (b)* Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
 - (c)* Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
 - (d)* The type of care or programme provided in the service.
 - (e)* The facilities available.
 - (f)* The opening hours and fees.
 - (g)* A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. These were shared with parents in their parent handbook.
 - (h)* Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
 - (i)* Staff rosters were maintained on a daily basis and available for inspection. These correlated with the numbers that were present on the day of inspection.
 - (j)* The service had a medication administration recording template book available that was completed in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered.
 - (k)* Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service was recorded.

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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

Delta's Little Academy ensured that the basic needs of the children in its care were met with a strong emphasis on health, hygiene, rest, and independence

Basic Needs:

Healthy Eating A healthy eating policy was followed, with breakfast provided to children upon arrival and healthy snacks supplied by parents for morning breaks. Frozen meals were reheated for hot dinners, and on the day of inspection, children had chili con carne for their main meal. Staff joined children at mealtimes, making it a social experience. Children had access to drinks throughout the day, during meals and when playing outdoors.

Rest and Sleep: After dinner, children who were tired had a designated rest period. They slept on low-level beds with individual linen, while staff stayed with them and monitored their sleep, documenting regular checks. Soft couches, blankets and floor mats were available for older children to rest when needed.

Hygiene and Toileting: Nappy changing facilities were available on both floors. Waist-high changing units with steps to access the units provided for older children. Hot water, soap, and hand towels were provided for hand hygiene, and foot pedal bins ensured waste disposal was hygienic. Children were provided with a change of clothes if necessary. In case of wet weather, outdoor gear and wellingtons were provided, ensuring all children played outside every day.

Communication with Parents: The service used a cloud-based app to keep parents informed about their child's daily activities, including meals, sleep, and play. Parents could also communicate important information to staff through the app. Children's personal belongings were stored in clearly labelled bags to help promote independence.

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Physical Environment:

Both ECCE rooms were thoughtfully arranged with interest areas that were clearly defined. Toys were stored in low-level shelves, and daily routines were displayed on the walls. The rooms featured large tuff trays for sensory play and areas for imaginative play with items like dolls, prams, and cookers. Relaxation spaces with soft lighting and books offered children time away from active play. The outdoor play areas were divided into spaces for different age groups, with climbing frames, ride-on toys, and supervised play activities.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid was at all times available to the children in the service. The designated person in charge had completed the First Aid Responder training. A refresher course was booked for August 2025 for renewal of certification.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible location on the ground floor.

(b) The first aid box were easily accessible at all times.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Supervision of children at all times was primarily by sight. There was an adequate number of qualified staff available on the premise to effectively supervise the number of preschool children present. Children who could use the toilet independently could do so while staff were in earshot, available to support the child if needed. During risky play activities e.g. using low level climbing frames, closer staff supervision was in place. The layout of the internal and external areas of the service were planned to allow for ease of visual supervision while at the same time allowing children some quiet time and space.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The current insurance certificate for the service was available. The service had insurance cover for 38 children to attend the full day care service. The commencement date of the policy was the 23rd of March 2024, and the expiry date of the policy was the 27th of March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally.
- (b) The building appeared safe and secured. Each staff member had a fob to gain access to and from the building.

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All access was managed appropriately with a visitor book available to record details of all who entered the building.

(c) All rooms were adequately heated and ventilated. All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.

(d) The smaller playground located next to the downstairs preschool room was well maintained and routine checks of this area was carried out each day before the children went outside to ensure the area was free of any hazards which could cause potential harm to any child.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing areas available in the service. All waste was managed appropriately with lots of foot pedal operated, lidded bins in all areas. Handwashing and drying facilities were suitable and adequate.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The larger outdoor playground was not well maintained. The area was covered in leaves following a recent storm. The large tarmac yard was slippery in many areas. A broken basketball net and poll was lying on the ground. These hazards in this area of the service could cause potential tripped risks for the children playing in this area of the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d)The registered provider has arranged for a maintenance company to carry out cleaning works in the large outdoor play area. An ongoing arrangement for regular maintenance of all outdoor areas is planned. All broken equipment in the outdoor area has been removed or repaired.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the works completed have been forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions, and the evidence submitted. The works to address the non-compliance's identified is ongoing this will be assessed at the next inspection of the service.