Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report
School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DR001SA
Name of School Age Service:	Little Puddles Childcare
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Padraig O'Connor
Address of School Age Service:	13 Glandore Park Monkstown Glenageary Dublin
Eircode:	A96 KN73

Date of Inspection:	20 August 2024	
Number of school age children present during inspection:	**PM**	21
Registration status:	Registered	
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable	

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell
Title:	Early years inspector

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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).

Description of Service:	Little Puddles School Age Service is located in a residential area of South Dublin. The service caters for children registered in a school setting aged 4-10 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday between 7:30 to 9:00am and 12:30 to 6:30pm. The service is registered to provide care from 8.30am to 5.30pm during non-term time. The service is located in the registered provider's own home on the ground floor. There are two care rooms in the main house and a purpose-built room in the garden. There are two toilets and handwash basins in the main house for children, with staff facilities upstairs. There is an outdoor area with direct access from the main house and garden to the rear of the property.

Staffing:	The registered provider works in the service. The registered provider employs six staff members, five work directly with the children and there is a driver. There were no new staff members since the last inspection in April 2024.

Additional Information:	The inspector conducted a follow-up focused inspection of the service. The Inspector observed three preschool children who were present on the day of the inspection. This was discussed with the registered provider. The service is not authorised to have a preschool service and this matter is currently before the courts.

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Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years' service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
b) provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
c) the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

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Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

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

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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 co-operation of the children, registered provider, person in charge, and staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The primary focus of this inspection was to ensure that there was not an unauthorised preschool in operation. Three preschool children who were present on the previous inspection of 24 April 2024 were no longer attending the service. Records reviewed by the inspector demonstrated that these children had not attended since 14 May 2024.

However, three new preschool children were present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider stated that these children were due to attend school in September 2024. The inspector was informed that these children had commenced in the service on 19 August 2024 for a settling-in period. This was confirmed in the documentation reviewed, which included the service's settling-in policy, a sample review of sign-in sheets and emails from the children's parents. This was discussed with the registered provider as the service is not authorised to operate a preschool service. This matter is currently before the courts.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures
(1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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 Síochana 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.*
Regulatory Requirement Met
This regulation was compliant following last inspection of 24 April 2024. Since the last inspection there were no new staff employed therefore staff files were not reviewed again on this inspection.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels
(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating. *(2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.* *(4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*
Regulatory Requirement Met
(1)(2)(4) On the day of the inspection, 3 staff members were working directly with the 21 children in attendance. The inspector observed appropriate supervision of the children. The children were given the opportunity to play outdoors in the garden and were appropriately supervised playing games and on the equipment.

Regulation 12: Insurance
A registered provider shall ensure that the school age service is adequately insured.
Regulatory Requirement Met
The service was insured from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025 for a maximum of 35 children. On the day of the inspection, there were 21 children in attendance.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013
It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met
The non-compliance from the previous inspection of 24 April 2024, in relation to Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency, was reviewed as part of this inspection. • Garda vetting disclosures for all staff members were dated within the previous three years. The registered provider was in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.