

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023LS002
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Name of Service:	Little Learners Pre School
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Address of Service:	Arles National School, Ballickmoyler, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R93 HY62
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mags Enright
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/10/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	nil
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Molloy
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

Description of service

This new sessional service is located in Arles in rural Co. Laois and is privately operated by the registered provider. It is registered to cater for up to 22 preschool children aged from 2 years -6 years. The hours of operation are from 09.30am -12.30pm daily. The service offers operates the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE).The service is located in a room in the primary school building which is used for the sole purpose of operating an early years' service. The service consists of one large playroom, a kitchenette, a lobby, and entrance hall, two toilets and wash hand basins and a nappy changing facility which have been designated for the sole use of the preschool children.

Staffing

The registered provider was part of the staff compliment and facilitated the inspection. Two staff including the registered providers work in the service. All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 6 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

This inspection was announced as this is the initial inspection of this new service 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 scope of the inspection included Play Room , the sanitary accommodation, nappy changing facilities, and the outdoor play facility.

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, who was 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider who is and the designated person in charge were present during the inspection. The person in charge facilitated the inspection and the roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

All staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.

(a) (b) Validated references from staff members’ past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review. Validated references from reputable sources were available for review.

(c) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all-staff member was available for review.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was not required for staff.

(3)

Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(4)

Adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6-8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)(b)

Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before June 30, 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A) No employee was working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day of inspection.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children. Records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld in the service.

(3) The registered provider had ensured that the adult child ratio was correctly maintained throughout the inspection and records showed that sufficient adults were rostered to work in the service each day.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person.

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

Basic Needs

The children bring in their own snacks from home which were observed to be in keeping with the healthy eating policy of the service.

A blend of outdoor and indoor activities was available. Children availed of fresh air and outdoor play on a facility while being supervised by the adults.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting Relationships.

Transitions from preschool to primary school can be well supported as this service is located in the primary school building and the children can see where they will go to once their preschool is completed. Teachers will be introduced to the preschool children.

Parents involvement is encouraged, and parents have opportunity to meet with staff each day at hand over time and could avail of meetings on a one-to-one basis with the registered provider if they so wish.

Physical and Material Environment

The pre-school room was bright and laid out to meet the needs of the children. The room was well stocked with developmentally appropriate toys and equipment areas of special interest. These included a home corner, a library area, art and crafts and table top activity, a construction area and nature table reflecting the autumn foliage and fruit outside, sand box, dolls and dolls house, buggies and prams and real teapot and cups for playing "house".

Cheerful artwork completed by the children was used to decorate the walls including autumn leaves and individual foot and hand prints.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages, and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and outdoors in the enclosed outdoor play facility. The play area was accessible through a hallway from the play room.
- (b)
- A cosy rest area was provided for children's use in the play room and children were observed making use of this rest facility.
- (2)
- (a)
- The registered provider had ensured that the children had access to a suitable, and secure outdoor space on a daily basis which accessible from the premises.

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 outdoor play area was secured with fencing and the gate was secured from inside.

All cleaning, sanitising products and equipment were stored in safe place out of reach of children.

A pest control system was in place to safe guard against pests.

Infection Control:

Good ventilation was observed through openable windows and mechanical ventilation system.

Clear guidance on handwashing was outlined for children and staff in the service. Children were observed washing their hands regularly.

Toys and play materials are cleaned daily and this is reflected in the cleaning roster.

Administration of Medication:

A site-specific medications management policy designed to assist staff and to help reduce potential adverse outcomes for children receiving medication while attending a pre-school was available in the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication.

No medication was administered on the day of inspection

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were unobstructed.

The fire exits were fitted with exit display signage.

A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point at the back of the service located to the front of the service

Outing:

The registered provider stated that no outings Would be conducted from the service

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) Staff had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available in the service 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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 written record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on 25 September 2023.
- (b)
- The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available.
- The fire alarms were serviced on 29 September 2023. The firefighting equipment was checked 23 July 2023.
- (2)
- The record was available open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.
- (3)
- The registered provider stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. was available in the service. The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to all information as was required for completion of the inspection.