

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC029			
Name of Service:	Aughadown Community Playschool Ltd.			
Address of Service:	Church Cross, Skibbereen, Co. Cork			
Eircode:	P81 DP68			
Name of Registered Provider:	Kathleen Keohane			
Service type:	Part Time			
Date(s) of Inspection:	17/02/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	8
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78			
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly			
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).				
Conditions if applicable	N/A			

Description of service

Aughadown Community Playschool is a community-based service, that provides part time care and is registered to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. On day of inspection the children were aged between 3 and 6 years and were availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 08:50 to 12:45 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates from a purpose built, single storey, detached building situated within a GAA sports grounds. It offers 2 large, interlinked playrooms, toilet facilities, adequate storage and a compact secured outdoor playground. The surrounding on-site grounds allow for sufficient car parking to ensure the children's safe arrival and departure from the service with their families.

Staffing

The registered provider operates in a voluntary capacity and the 3 staff included the person in charge, a deputy and a relief worker. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification 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:

- 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/ safety/ 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, the deputy and the 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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.
- (Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 3 staff members and the registered provider. The following records were available for the four adults:
- (2)
- (a) Of the required 8 references, 5 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the remaining references, 3 reference were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) A police vetting record was on file for the one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- There was evidence that the 3 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed 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.

(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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the playroom in operation.
There were 8 children aged between 3 and 5 years present in the morning and in the afternoon attending the part time service with 2 adults in attendance at all times. The adult child ratio was correct.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the children's registration forms. were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.
- (k) There was a hard copy Accident and Incident record maintained in the service. The person in charge informed the inspectorate there were only two accidents or incident records to review since the last inspection. Each entry had been counter signed by the child's parent to evidence that the information had been relayed.

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 service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- Cubby space in the playroom allowed the children to independently store bags, drink bottles, personal belongings and crafts to be taken home.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Self-toileting by the children was encouraged. A staff member was observed supervising and assisting where required each of

the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting and messy play.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was maintained with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members worked well together, and the children were familiar with the routine, Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.
- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults for example the opening of lunch boxes, cartons and peeling of fruits.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.
- One of the parents shared his skills and assisted the children to plant vegetables in a raised covered planting bed in the outdoor play area.
- The service was closely integrated with the wider community, both staff members had worked in the service since 1992, therefore were closely connected to the many families, parents and children that had attended the setting. Previous attendees included Olympian rowing champions and a local politician which was celebrated by the service.
- The local successful Olympian rowing team visited the service following the Paris Olympics 2024.
- Ongoing observations linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, were furnished to the inspector. These documented the children's development and inclusion of the children's emergent interest.
- The service operated in partnership with parents, communication with parents about service issues was conducted via digital applications both in group and individual form.

Physical and Material Environment

- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as art and crafts, imaginary play and tabletop activities.
- The indoor environment of the playroom was laid out in defined interest areas, including home/construction area, arts and crafts area and tabletop activities area.

- There was a well-equipped home corner with dress up and items to encourage pretend play.
- Tabletop activities included fine motor skill materials such as jig saws and puzzles and children had access to small and large construction items.
- A soft padded mat was available beside the book area where books were displayed at child height.
- Only one of the interlinked playrooms was in use, the layout of the room promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children’s autonomy and freedom of choice.
- The service was clean, bright, and well maintained and the openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- There was a designated outdoor play area provided beside the premise. The outdoor play area had an all-weather surface. A number of resources providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills such as cycling, kicking, throwing and sliding were available in the outdoor play area from resources including a climbing frame, basketball net, balance beams, see saws, push and ride on toys, balls and hoops.
- Sensory play included raised planting areas and a sand table with ample sand and utensils for the children to enjoy digging and spilling.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children’s parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.

- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge in the kitchen.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- The service provided crockery and cutlery.

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:

- On the inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- The children had no access to the service kitchen.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playroom in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a high metal fence and gate

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom and in the children's and adult toilet facilities. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting and messy play.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- One of the children had been prescribed medication, which they may require while in attendance.
- Medications were safely stored and in date.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions.

Outing:

- An outing from the childcare facility did not take place at the time of inspection.

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 did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that one staff member held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the morning of the 22/01/2025

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in August 2024.

(4)
The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 22 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.