

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC035
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Name of Service:	Ballyclough Playschool
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Address of Service:	The Community Centre, Ballyclough, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 E793
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Mortell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

Ballyclough Playschool is a private sessional service in operation since 1989. The service facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme between the hours of 9.20 am and 12.20 pm. The facility is registered to take children from 2 years to 6 years of age and currently children attend who are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years of age. The service is open Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year.

Ballyclough Playschool is located in the rural village of Ballyclough near Mallow in North Cork. It operates from a care room within the community centre where there is an adjoining kitchen area. Sanitary facilities for both adults and children are located off the main hall. A community playground is located nearby, and a carpark area is situated to the side of the service.

Staffing

There are two staff currently employed in the service and a volunteer was present on the day.

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 and safety. The inspections 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 registered provider, volunteer, 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.*

(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) The registered provider is the designated person in charge, a named person is available to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was available throughout the inspection. The roster indicated that either the designated person in charge or the named person are present while the pre-school children are in attendance.
- (2) The registered provider, named person, the two emergency contacts and the volunteer were the focus of the recruitment review.
- (a) (b) There were six validated references from past employers and four validated references from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available on file for the four adults and the volunteer.
- (d) A disclosure for international police vetting was on file for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as an adult.
- (4) One adult held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications and the second adult had a Letter of Eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Neither the emergency contacts or the volunteer required qualifications.

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) At all times there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was met. There were seven children in attendance with one adult and one volunteer.

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) Seven records of the pre-school children attending the service were assessed. Each record was found to contain the particulars (a)-(i) above.

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;*
- (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 was kept in writing of the following information:
 - (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the designated person in charge, named person, the two emergency contacts and the volunteer.
 - (b) The details of the class of service and the age profile of children were available on the Tusla registration certificate which was located on the notice board inside the care room.
 - (c) Provision was made on each registration form to record the date the child would cease using the pre-school service.
 - (d) (e) (f) The type of care programme, facilities, opening hours and fees were available in the service brochure available to parents/guardians.
 - (h) The daily attendance book in which the registered provider recorded the arrival and departure of each child and the staff attendance was available noted to be up to date.
 - (i) Details of the staff rosters from September 2022 were available on the day of inspection.

- (j) A template was available for the administration of medication, however there were no completed forms as no child had required medication to date.
- (k) One accident was recorded in the service dated 30/08/2018, this had been signed by staff and the parent of the child.

Non-Compliance Information

- (g) The nappy changing procedure was missing particulars including the wearing of disposable aprons and gloves and removal of same for each change. In addition, that the adult and child should wash their hands when the nappy change had been completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (g) The nappy changing procedure was updated to include the recommended changes.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (g) A copy of the updated nappy changing procedure was received in the office of the inspectorate which included the relevant particulars.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met.

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 were observed eating healthy and nutritious food during mid-morning snack which aligned with the service's healthy eating policy. Examples included ham sandwiches, crackers, yogurt, watermelon, cut grapes and raspberries. Children could access water, in the care room, throughout the morning and each child had an individual water bottle.

- Children were observed being taken to the toilet in a group before snack, the staff member was on hand to provide assistance.
- Nappy changing facilities were available in the staff sanitary area.
- A heater was available, if required, in the children's sanitary area, the temperature of the room was recorded at 18°C.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by staff, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- The staff member was observed helping the children to find positive solutions to minor issues which occurred during play, supporting them while discussing the issue, questioning and suggesting possible ways of resolving the issue.
- The children had room to move freely and explore indoors and outdoors.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- The staff member and the volunteer sat with the children during mid-morning snack and while carrying out tabletop activities. They both engaged in social conversation with the children who were heard discussing their favourite animals at the wildlife park where they had recently been on a visit and also explaining a joke on food packaging to a child.
- The children were supported to engage positively with each other in activities which required turn taking and sharing.
- Transitions between activities were managed verbally with a warning and visually with a timer in order that children could see how long they had left at each activity.
- The staff member and the volunteer encouraged and supported the children and helped them to tidy away the toys, praising the children's efforts when the task was completed.
- Communication with parents/guardians where information on the children is exchanged was stated as taking place at drop off and collection, by text and by email.
- Staff meetings were stated as taking place informally every day and formally every fortnight with topics such as weekly planning, issues and events being discussed.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The room was laid out in clearly defined areas with a home corner, dressing up rail, pirate ships, dolls, and a playhouse providing opportunities for imaginary play and role play. A variety of equipment and toys were available which supported the children's cognitive development including puzzles and construction. Arts and crafts materials along with pasta supported children to engage in sensory exploration and open-ended discovery.
- The layout of the care room allowed the staff member to supervise the children as they moved to different areas.
- The equipment and resources were stored on low-level shelving which was easily accessible and provided choice and independence.
- The children were seated on chairs at tables which were age and stage appropriate.
- A range of books were available which supported the children's language and development.
- The outdoor community playground offered an alternative play environment for the children. A range of equipment, which supported the children's gross motor development, was available including swings, climbing frame, slide and roundabout. The children also have access to the large hall and this was observed in use on the day, with the children running in this area. They have access to a range of equipment including skittles, balls and a parachute.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Observations of the children with extended learning goals, linked to Aistear the curriculum framework, were available for each child. Certificates were available which indicated that staff had recently completed an Aistear Workshop.
- Weekly planning was available on a timetable on the wall which detailed circle time activities, language, maths, motor skills and sensory processing activities planned for the week.
- Children's language development was supported through a variety of ways including a library service offered by the playschool to the children whereby they can take home a book on a Monday and return it on Friday. The children also have the opportunity to take home George (A toy pig) and his bag which has pyjamas and a toothbrush. When they take him home they relate on his return the adventures that George went on which are recorded in a book in the bag.
- Children were facilitated to make their own choice throughout the morning in selecting play equipment and activities that they wished to engage with. The children were observed playing cooperatively with their friends and asking staff for assistance when required.

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:

- All indoor and external doors were secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- The main entrance was secured ensuring no unauthorised adults could enter the service.
- All toys and resources appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- All flexes and cables in the care room were placed out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen, which was inaccessible to the children.
- Indoor waste was stored securely in pedal operated bins.
- Outdoor waste was located in an area outdoors which was not accessible by the children.
- The pull cord in the sanitary area was secured out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was secured with metal fencing and bolted metal gates.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food was stored in the fridge preventing spoilage.
- The children were observed washing their hands before mid-morning snack and after toileting, an adult was available to remind children to wash their hands and roll up their sleeves.
- The wash hand basins in use by the adults and children in the care room and in the sanitary areas had thermostatically controlled hot water ranging in temperature from 27°C to 32°C, dispensing soap, paper towels and pedal operated bins available for the disposal of waste.
- Children's coats and bags were kept on a mobile trolley off the floor area.
- Tissues were available for children to wipe their noses, if required.
- The adult, working directly with the children, was observed disinfecting the tables before and after food and sweeping the floor.
- Each child has their own individual pencil case with coloured pencils, in order that they can use their own materials and reduce the risk of cross infection from using shared resources.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was available, stored in its original container and was in date.

Safe Sleep:

- A rest area furnished with a two-seater sofa, blankets and a soft toy were available for children who wished to rest or sit quietly.

Fire Safety:

- All fire doors leading from the care room were unobstructed.
- The fire assembly point was located in the outdoor carpark, a suitable distance from the service.

Outing:

- The service had been on their annual tour the day before inspection. In discussion with the registered provider the parents/guardians had signed an outings consent form prior to the outing taking place. Insurance was in place and the necessary points of the service's outings policy were adhered to ensuring the children had a safe trip such as adult child ratios, first aid box being brought on the trip and a risk assessment being carried out to assess potential risks.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) The windows in the care room were not fitted with restrictors, posing a risk that children may exit or fall from the windows.
- (2) A large doll's house in the care room was not anchored, posing a potential risk from tipping or falling on top of a child.

Infection Control:

- (3) Two children's changing mats were located on the floor of the nappy changing area, posing a risk of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- (1) The window restrictors have been included in the summer work programme due to be carried out in August 2023.
- (2) The doll's house has been secured with brackets to the wall.

Infection Control:

- (3) The changing mats have been removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) The statement from the registered provider that the window restrictors have been included in the summer work programme to be completed in August 2023 was deemed to meet regulatory compliance. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.
- (2) A photograph of the doll's house secured by brackets to the wall was submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- (3) The statement from the registered provider that the mats have been removed was deemed to meet regulatory compliance.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met. The window restrictors will be reviewed on the next 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) Certificates were available to evidence that at least one staff member and one of the emergency contacts had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed. The expiry dates of the certificates were recorded as 30 September 2023 and 16 May 2024 respectively. The staff roster indicated the staff member was available at all times.
- (2)
 - (a) (b) The first aid box was stored in the kitchen on a shelf which was easily accessible to the adults and available 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 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 written record was available detailing the fire drills which had taken place in the service. The last drill was recorded as taking place on 23 May 2023.
 - (4) The notice of the fire drill procedures was displayed on the notice board in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) Up-to date maintenance certificates were unavailable for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The maintenance certificates for both the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were dated 15 November 2021.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (b) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms have since been serviced.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) Copies of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm certificates were submitted to the office of the inspectorate. Both certificates were dated the 19 June 2023.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met.

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 that the pre-school was insured. A written record was available with the expiry date recorded as 27 March 2024. The service was insured for 22 sessional children and included information such as including public liability, outings, fire brigade and employer's liability.