

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC057
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Name of Service:	Berrings Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Berrings Cross, Berrings, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12 YA38
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sheila McCarthy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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
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Description of service

Berrings Pre-School is an established early years service and is in operation since 1992. It is a privately owned service, offering the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years and operates Monday to Friday, 8:40am to 11:40am and 12pm to 3pm, 38 weeks of the year. The service is located in a two-storey detached family home, in the rural village of Berrings, Co Cork. On the first floor, there is one care room, a small play area on the landing and sanitary facilities. A large outdoor area is located at the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service employs two staff members including the registered provider. On the day of inspection these 2 staff members were present.

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. 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 registered provider, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 was the designated person in charge and a named person was available to deputise if required.
 - (b) The registered provider and the named person were on the premises for the duration of the inspection and were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation which was clearly outlined on checking in and out records.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

- (2) Two staff files were reviewed including the file of the registered provider.
- (a) One of the four references were from a past employer and were validated.
- (b) Three of the four references were from a reputable source and were validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. 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 as they had not lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Both staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from a level 5 to level 6 on the national qualifications framework or deemed equivalent by the minister.

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) There were adequate staff to care for the preschool children in attendance in the service.
- (3) On arrival to the service, there were eight preschool children aged from 3 to 5 years being cared for by the two staff members.

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 sample of 12 children records were assessed and all forms were completed with the relevant information outlined from (a) to (i).

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

- Children were observed washing their hands before snack time.
- Water was readily available to the children in the care room on a child height shelf.

- Staff were aware of the individual care needs of the children and ensured that each child's needs were met. The staff outlined to the inspector that observations are carried out on a regular basis to ensure the service could support each child's learning and development.
- Children were observed to be freely moving around the care room and choosing activities of their choice.
- The children had an opportunity to play in the large outdoor area and were observed to be enjoying their time playing.

Supporting Relationships

- Family pictures were displayed in the care room to support each child's sense of identity and belonging.
- The staff were observed sitting with the children at snack time and the environment was observed to be comfortable for the children to sit and enjoy their food.
- Staff were observed supporting the children while promoting independence. This was observed when the children were putting on their wellie boots in the outdoor area and during an easter art and craft activity.
- The registered provider outlined the importance of communicating with the children's parents and guardians on a regular basis. The inspector was informed that the service carries out meetings to support the children's learning and development while also maintaining a relationship with each child's family.

Physical and material environment

- Low level chairs and tables were available to the children to sit at snack time and during tabletop activities.
- Construction bricks, toy cars and farm animals were available to the children in the landing area of the service.
- Tabletop activities such as jigsaws and art and craft materials were available to the children.
- The outdoor area was large and spacious with natural materials such as grass and bark surfaces.
- A large sandbox that children could sit in was available with equipment such as buckets and shovels. A mud kitchen was also accessible to the children to support sensory development.
- A climbing structure and slide supported children's physical movement.
- A buddy bench was located in the corner of the outdoor area to support emotional and social development.

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 main entrance door was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- Internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- The outdoor area was safe and secured with a fence and gate. A staff member closed the main gates to the service to ensure the safety of the children.
- A stairgate was placed at the top of the stairs to prevent a child from climbing the stairs unsupervised.
- Suitable handrails were available to the children when using the stairs. The registered provider and the member of staff were observed supervising the children at all times when the stairs were in use. The stairs were adequately lit and the floor covering was observed to be in good condition.
- Toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition and free from pinch and crush points at the time of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towel were available to the children and staff in the sanitary area.
- Lidded and foot pedal operated bins were available in the care room and sanitary area.
- Children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator to prevent perishable foods from spoiling.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed clear and unobstructed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out daily in a written record by a parent or guardian. The registered provider also had a roll book for checking in and out children in attendance on a daily basis.

(3)

(a) The inspector was requested by the registered provider to check in and out on a visitor book.

(b) A written record was available for the checking in and out of visitors to the service on a daily basis.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider insured the service was adequately insured. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2025 and expired on 27 March 2026.