

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC061
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Name of Service:	Blarney Community Playschool CLG
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Address of Service:	Rooms 1 & 2, Scoil an Chroí Íosa, St Anne's Road, Blarney, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T23 E722
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maura Hughes
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork.
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Inspection undertaken by:	B. Fraher and J. Russell
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Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Blarney Community Playschool CLG first opened in 1984 and is operating from the existing premises since 2011. It is an early years sessional service that operates under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). It is registered for age 2-6 years and currently caters for children from age two years and ten months to four years and ten months. It operated from two designated rooms within Scoil Chroí Íosa along with a designated children and adult toilet facilities and a storeroom. The opening hours are from 9.00am to 12.00pm each morning and 12.30pm to 3.30pm each evening Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There were six staff employed by the service, one of whom was employed by the Access and Inclusion Model (AIMS). There were two students on the premises on the day of the inspection.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 26, 28, 29, and 30, however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 25. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of 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

(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) Within the service, there was a designated person in charge and a named deputy was available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived. The staff roster indicated they were available at the service during the hours of inspection.
- (2) The recruitment record in relation to six staff employed and two students in the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 14 references required, 8 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the 14 references required, 8 references were from a source other than a previous employer with records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the six staff members.

(d) No staff member had lived outside the state for over 6 months as an adult, therefore no one required police vetting.

(4) All staff employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

(9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, the adequate number of adults required for the direct care and supervision of the children were in attendance at all times.

(3) Minimum adult/child ratios were observed over the duration of the inspection as follows:

Name and age range of the children.	Number of children present	Number of adults present
Room 1 2 years 10 months to 3years 7 months	11	3
Room 2 3 years 11 months to 4 years 10 months	11	3

(9) Two students were present on the day of inspection and were not included in the adult/child ratios.

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

1(a) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff.
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic needs:

- Snacks which were provided by the parents/guardians were observed to be mainly healthy and nutritious. Examples included rice cakes, sandwiches, fruit and yogurts and were stored in the refrigerator.
- Children had their own individual bottles with water being the main choice of drink. This was accessible to the children at all times.
- Staff sat near the children during snack time and assisted children as needed with opening containers or wrapping when a child found it difficult to do so.
- Children were observed throughout the morning accessing the toilet individually or in groups. The adults were present to provide assistance if needed.
- The children were noted to dress appropriately for outdoors with coats on.
- Rest/quiet areas were available in both care rooms and were furnished with low level sofas in the book area of each room.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed engaging positively with children throughout the morning. During tabletop activities staff were heard praising children's efforts and giving encouragement in relation to each child's chosen activity. Examples included children completing puzzles and colouring art.
- Children's independence was encouraged with children observed putting on and zipping up their coats before they go out to play.

- Children actively participated with science exploration in both classrooms, taking part in an experiment with the use of skittles and water.
- Staff encouraged communication and language development through discussing topics of interest with the child during conversation and encouraging the child to expand on the discussion on these topics. Examples heard by the inspector were discussions about trick or treat and about growing taller.
- Various methods of communication were stated as being used to communicate and exchange information with parents/guardians. Staff stated in conversation that they speak to parents at drop off and collection. This was seen on the day of inspection. Staff also used a text message system to relay information to parents.

Physical and material environment:

- The two care rooms had a range of play based materials and equipment that provided opportunities to enhance and promote the learning needs of the children across all areas of development. Some examples included dress up costume and a puppet show.
- Magnetic bricks which seen to be in use on the day of inspection, promote critical thinking and problem solving. Other activities completed that fostered development were colouring and creating artwork which promoted fine motor skills.
- The room was brightly lit, and the material and resources were presented on low shelving units which encouraged choice and promoted independence.
- Children's autumn themed artwork project was displayed creatively on the wall at a lower height so children could continue to explore their work. A child was seen by the inspector, showing his work to a student present.
- Age and stage appropriate tables and chairs were arranged for the children to sit in a group or individually.
- The outdoor play area was observed to provide a range of developmentally appropriate equipment for the children. Examples included Scooters and balance bikes which promotes gross motor skill development and sensory play was provided through the use of a sand box and a planting area.
- The storeroom contained additional resources which enabled the staff to rotate the play materials on a regular basis.

Programme of activities:

- Activities were child led with children being facilitated to make their own choice in selecting equipment and activities they wished. Examples include children playing imaginatively with dolls while others choose to work on puzzles.

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 day of inspection, the entrance door was locked on arrival to the premises. This restricted unauthorised access into the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting while unsupervised.

- The windows in the care rooms were adequately secured to ensure a child could not exit or fall.
- Blinds were fitted with a tension safety device.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and were free from pinch and crush points.
- All cleaning agents were seen to be stored out of reach of the children.
- The temperature of warm water in the care rooms and sanitary accommodation were recorded at 26.3°C to 30.4°C.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. Children were observed to wash their hand before snack and after using the toilet. Staff were observed to remind children to do so in both care rooms.
- The inspector observed a child encouraged to blow her nose, dispose of the tissue and wash her hands afterwards.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste.
- Children's coats were stored off the ground on hooks and bags were stored in a shelving unit.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to the children at the time of inspection.
- The person in charge informed me that no child attending the service is currently prescribed medicine.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.

Outing:

- The service had no planned outings currently.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

- 1 The inspectors noted that no staff members on the day of inspection held an in date FAR certificate. In the event of an accident or injury occurring to a child, this posed a safety risk to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Two staff members have completed first aid. FAR training was booked for the 12th December 2024. The service plans to check staff files each term, and to stagger booking of first aid for staff to ensure a up to date trained staff member is present at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Proof of booking of FAR and first aid training received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25.

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.*

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

(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) The inspector was provided with a list of monthly fire drills. The most recent fire drill was undertaken on the 22nd of October 2024.
- (b) The certification of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated that it was carried out on the 14th of March 2024. The certification of testing for the smoke alarms was dated 8th March 2024 and again on the 2nd July 2024.
- (2)
- (c) All records were furnished to the inspector on request.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the door and wall in each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a sessional service and the policy was valid until the 27th March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
 - From a visual assessment, the building appears to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)
 - Access to the building was obtained by ringing a bell and each care room door was individually secured.
- (c)
 - Within the care rooms, natural light was provided through windows, and this was supplemented with artificial lighting.
 - Adequate lighting was also ensured in the sanitary facilities, through the use of a combination of natural and artificial lighting.
 - Oil heating was used on the premises and wall mounted heaters which were not accessible to children were available in each care room and sanitary facilities also.
 - Each of the two care rooms were supplied with natural ventilation through open windows.
- (d)
 - The premises were noted to be maintained in a clean condition.
- (e)
 - The sanitary facilities were located across the corridor from the care rooms.
 - They were equipped with five toilets, one of which was for staff and three wash hand basins.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(6) Subject to paragraph (7), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are no more than 22 children in a room in the service at any time.

Compliance Information

(1) There is adequate clear floor space provided in the care room for the free movement of children.

(3) The minimum amount of clear floor space has been ensured. Room 1 was measured at 42.39m² and room 2 was measured at 42.66m².

(6) The registered provider has ensured that there were no more than 22 children in each of the care rooms of the service at any one time.