

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC074
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Name of Service:	Brooklodge Community Playschool Limited
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Address of Service:	Brooklodge Community Centre, Brooklodge, Glanmire, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T45 TN88
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth Collins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	24/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast & S O' Brien
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Brooklodge Community Playschool Limited has been in operation since 1989. It is a community based service that is registered to provide sessional care for children aged two to six years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from Monday to Thursday, over 41 weeks of the year, with daily opening hours from 9.00am to 12.30pm.

Located in the suburb of Glanmire in Co. Cork, the early years service is provided from a community centre. Within the single storey, detached building, there is one operational care room, which is partitioned into two separate pods. Adjacent sanitary facilities are available, as well as an office and a kitchen. An enclosed outdoor play space is accessible at the rear of the premises. Since the previous inspection, a sensory room cabin has been added to the outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are five adults are attached to the service, including the registered provider, who was providing cover at the time of inspection. One of the adults is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme and there is one Community Employment (CE) participant. Each of the five adults holds a major award 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy 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) The registered provider had ensured that a person in charge was assigned to the service, along with a deputy person in charge.
 - (b) Both the registered provider and the deputy person in charge were on duty when the inspectors arrived to carry out the inspection and remained for its duration.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the five adults attached to the setting were assessed and the following information was obtained:
- (a) Ten written and validated references were required in total. Of these, eight had been obtained from past employers.
 - (b) There were two written and validated references on file from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five 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 held for one of the adults, who had resided in another jurisdiction for a period of 6 consecutive months or longer, while over the age of 18.
- (4) All five of the adults who were involved in the direct care of the children had achieved a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d)
- It was not possible to determine the requirement or otherwise for police vetting in respect of one adult, as their curriculum vitae was incomplete.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The written reply outlined that the C.V. was returned to the staff member to be completed. As a preventive measure, the person in charge will ensure that there are no gaps in employee's CVs in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated CV.

Summary Comment

The written response and evidence submitted are accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The service's policy on Settling In was assessed and deemed satisfactory.

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) During the period of inspection, it was noted that a sufficient number of adults were working with the children who attended the service.

(3) The correct adult to child ratio was maintained on the day of the inspection. The two pods in operation were staffed as follows:

- In the Butterflies pod, there was one staff member and one CE participant working directly with seven children, who were aged two years and eight months to three years.
- A total of eight children, aged four to four and a half years, attended the Ladybirds pod and there were two adults responsible for their care. This included one AIM support staff member.

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:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (j) Signed parental consent was in place for staff to administer the medication that had been prescribed for one of the children. The inspectors were advised that said medication had not been administered at the service to date, therefore completed administration of medication records were not required.

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)

Basic needs:

- Two snack breaks were facilitated for both pods during the sessional service. The children in the Ladybirds pod were observed to have a fruit snack at 10.20am and at 11.15am, the mid-morning snack was observed in the Butterfly pod.
- Crockery was available for the children to use and children had access to their own individual water bottles during the morning. Staff were observed refilling some of these water bottles, from a water tap in the care room.
- A new nappy changing facility had been installed since the previous inspection to accommodate the children who required same. Staff advised that nappy changing was attended to after the mid-morning snack and as required. This was subsequently observed in practice.
- When using the sanitary facilities, the children were supported by the adults to do so in an independent manner. For example, verbal prompts and reminders were offered by the adults, as the children washed their hands and a song about handwashing was also initiated.
- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as water play, imaginary play and table top activities. The children also had the opportunity to play outdoors on two occasions during the morning.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff were aware of the Settling In policy and had a clear understanding of same. Evidence of the policy's implementation was clear on the day of inspection, as a parent was observed to remain in the care room, while her child was adapting to the setting. Staff were also noted to communicate with the parents of another child, who had recently commenced attending the service.
- The adults sat with the children during mealtimes and spoke in a caring manner, helping the children as needed. The atmosphere around mealtimes was relaxed and children were given plenty of time to enjoy their food.

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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- The service had one large care room divided into two pods and a large outdoor area, which was accessible through the Ladybirds pod. Each pod was equipped with furniture, toys, equipment and materials that supported the age, stage of development and the interests of the children.
- Materials such as a dolls house, a play kitchen and dress up clothes promoted imaginary play and role play. Art and craft materials were accessible to the children on open shelving units, at child height. Jigsaws, books and construction toys, such as plastic and timber blocks and hand held vehicles, were also displayed at the children’s level.
- The outdoor area comprised a large space for children to learn and explore. A variety of surfaces were provided, such as concrete, grass and bark chippings. Bikes, trikes and ride on cars were freely available to the children. Playhouses of various sizes were placed in the grass covered section and allowed children to move around the area safely. There was a slide and a climbing unit in the bark chipping area, which supported children’s movement and gross motor development. Music tubes, a mirror/activity wall, tubes of bubbles and tyres were also in use. This play environment was noted to cater for the play needs of all the children who attended the service.

(b) Each pod had an area where the children could rest and relax. In the Ladybirds pod, the cosy area consisted of vinyl sofas positioned next to a selection of books and vinyl sofas were also available in the Butterfly pod, along with a floor mat.

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

- Food and drinks for the children were provided by their parents or guardians and by the service. The fruit snack consisted of bananas, chopped grapes and apples and was supplied by the service. Children brought their own snacks for the mid-morning break. Examples included ham sandwiches, scrambled eggs, rice cakes, cheese, yoghurts, fruit and crackers. Such snacks were varied and allowed the children to have choice. Water was available to drink at both meal breaks.
- Children were observed to have adequate amounts of food throughout the day. It was reported that if a child became hungry outside of the allocated mealtimes, they could select a snack from their lunchbox.
- The deputy person in charge advised that one of the children had a food allergy and that this was managed through adopting a nut free policy at the setting.

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 adequately secured against the risk of unauthorised entry; a doorbell entry system was in place from the exterior.
- High-level door handles were installed on both care room doors which led to the hallway and main entrance/exit door.
- The outdoor play space was enclosed by a combination of fencing, walls and secured gates.
- A surface of bark chippings was available under the climbing frame in the outdoor play environment, which created a soft fall area.
- Cords from window blinds were secured with suitable tension devices.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes accessible to children in the care room.

- Firefighting equipment was safely wall mounted.
- Radiator covers were in place to reduce the risk of a child sustaining a scald injury.
- Cleaning agents and first aid supplies were stored out of the children's reach.

Infection Control:

- The practice of hygienic handwashing and drying was promoted through the availability of warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers at the children's wash hand basins. It was noted that the children washed their hands before both snack breaks and after outdoor play.
- A disposable apron and gloves were worn by one of the adults during an observed nappy changing procedure. Following the nappy change, the adult sanitised the changing mat and washed her hands.
- Labelled wall hooks were in use to store the children's coats.
- Staff members were observed to undertake cleaning tasks after the children had been collected from the service.
- The care room and sanitary facilities were naturally ventilated through open windows.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed by the inspectors.
- The medication held for one of the children was in-date, clearly labelled and was safely stored in a location that was inaccessible to children. Staff medication was also stored out of the children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were noted to sleep while in attendance.

Outing:

- Not applicable, as an outing was not observed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Three trampolines were accessible to the children; one in the Butterfly pod and two in the outdoor play area. Trampoline jumping poses a risk of injury to children and their use is prohibited in early years services for this reason.
2. A free standing portable heater, surrounded by a moveable safety guard, was observed in the sensory room. Portable heaters are not suitable for early years settings, as they are considered a potential fire hazard. In addition, the cable from said heater had not been tethered, which posed an additional risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

3. It was observed that one of the children was not reminded to wash their hands after having their nappy changed, which increased the risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The response from the person in charge advised that the three trampolines have been removed. The person in charge is aware that such equipment can only be utilised if recommended in writing by an occupational therapist for a specific child.
2. The freestanding heater has been removed from the room. A wall mounted heater, which includes a timer, has been ordered and an electrician has been booked to install same. The room will not be used until the new heater has been installed.

Infection Control:

3. Children will wash their hands after being changed and this will be documented by staff on a new written template. Going forward, all staff must sign that the child's hands have been washed before returning to the classroom.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence.
2. A photograph to demonstrate that the portable heater has been removed and a photograph of the new heater.

Infection Control:

3. A copy of the new template for nappy changing.

Summary Comment

The response from the person in charge was deemed to meet regulatory compliance with regulation 23.

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) First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates were available to demonstrate that two adults had completed FAR training and the staff roster indicated that one of these adults was available at all times, while the service was in operation.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid kit was stored on a wall hook in the care room, which was within easy reach for the adults.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were consistently available throughout the hours of operation.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b)
- The first aid kit was insufficiently stocked. There were no large, or extra large sterile wound dressings provided for use and the two available medium size wound dressings were out of date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b)
- The missing stock has been ordered online, due to lack of availability locally. Going forward, the first aid bag will hang in the room and will be checked monthly for up-to-date stock. If anything needs to be replaced, it will be ordered online.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the delivery docket for the required first aid supplies.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the person in charge 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 firefighting 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)
- (b) Information regarding the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment was made available. Documentation from a fire safety company indicated that the firefighting equipment was checked on 12 September 2024.
- (4) The steps to be taken in the event of a fire were set out in a written notice, which was displayed in the entrance area.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Clear and comprehensive fire drill records were unavailable. Records for the months of January to April 2024 did not include the dates that the drills were undertaken, details in relation to the numbers of children present, or the duration of the fire drills. The fire drill for May, which was documented separately within the staff meeting minutes, was also missing the aforementioned information and there were no written fire drill records for the months of June, July or September 2024.
- (b) Annual servicing of the wired smoke alarm was not ensured, as required. The most recent record of servicing available was dated 13 September 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) A new template has been created to ensure that the date, number of children present and duration of the fire drills are included.
- (b) A certificate of servicing for the wired smoke alarm has been submitted. The certificate is posted on the notice board in the service, with the date that the next service is due.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a) A copy of the updated fire drill record.

(b) A certificate of servicing for the wired smoke alarm, dated 25 September 2024, was received on 26 September 2024.

Summary Comment

Following the corrective action implemented by the person in charge, regulatory compliance is determined to have been met.