

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC133		
Name of Service:	Drinagh Community Playgroup CLG		
Address of Service:	Derryclough National School, Drinagh, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P47 YY30		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ann Marie Menzies		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	13/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Social Work Dept, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork P81 PD78		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Carney		
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

Drinagh Community Playgroup is registered to provide an early year setting for children aged from 2 to 6 years on a sessional basis.

It operates from 09:15am to 12:15pm on a daily basis.

The service is situated in a rural environment approximately 10 kms from Skibbereen town in west Cork.

The service is situated within a national school, offering a large playroom, extensive outdoor play areas and toilet facilities.

Staffing

The registered provider has employed a person to oversee operation and an additional 3 childcare professionals to work directly with the children. An additional adult has been enlisted on a community employment scheme. Four adults had certification of Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training, ranging from Level 5 to Level 8.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
The registered provider had failed to notify the Agency in writing at least 60 days prior to a proposed change in respect of times of operation of the service. This was identified when the person in charge stated that times of operation had changed to 09:15am to 12:15pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that a Change in Circumstance form has been submitted with the changes for processing, also going forward the service will notify of any changes in advance of changes being implemented. The application was submitted to evidence this.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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 did not work directly with the children. An adult had been appointed as the person in charge and operated the service. A deputy had been appointed to deputise as required.

(b)

On the day of the inspection the person in charge was present and available to facilitate the inspection process. Examination of the staff roster indicated that 2 adults were always on the premises during service operation.

(2)(a) & (b)

There was a total of 5 adults attached to the service and each of their files were examined. The following information was obtained -

There were 8 written past employer references available with 6 records of validation attached.

There were 2 written references from sources that the registered provider considered to be reputable. Records of validation was attached.

(c)

There were 5 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were on file ranging from Level 5 to Level 8

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

Police vetting was not available for 1 adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction of Ireland for a period of 6 consecutive months or longer.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the outstanding police vetting declaration has been requested, but to date has not been received.

The application was scanned to evidence this action.

Summary Comment

The Requirement is met, this will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Although the service had the following policies in place, on inspection they were found to be inadequate as they did not include the following information -

1. The healthy eating policy did not state how food is stored, prepared and served.
2. The policy on behaviour management did not set out practices that are prohibited in the service such as corporal punishment, degrading or neglectful practices.
3. The policy for the administration of medication did not state the procedures for dealing with and administering prescription and over the counter medication and sunscreen.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Submitted Documentation

1 -3. The registered provider stated that the above policies had been amended and updated.

Copies of the polies were forwarded to evidence that the non-compliance had been addressed.

Summary Comment

Documentation in the form of updated and amended policies were forwarded to the early years office, reviewed and found to satisfactory meet the Requirements.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(3)

There were 20 children aged from 3 to 4 years attending on a sessional basis with 3 adults in attendance. The adult child ratios were 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)
Of the 20 children attending on the day of the inspection, a total of 12 of their enrolment forms were examined to ensure that they contained the required elements of Regulation 15 (a) to (i).
Each form was found to be compliant.

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;*
- (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

The following records were reviewed in relation to the service –

- (1)(h) A register to record the children’s attendance maintained on a daily basis;
- (i) Staff rosters were made available;
- (j) The service had a logbook developed by an agency associated with early years settings for the correct recoding of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent. There were no entries.
- (k) A logbook was made available for the recording of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service. There were no entries.

Non-Compliance Information

(a)

An adult attached to the service did not have a complete record of previous experience on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation

(a) The registered provider stated that a record of previous experience has been obtained and on file. A copy of this document was forwarded to evidence that the issue had been addressed.

Summary Comment

The Requirement 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:

- Food and drink items were provided by the children's parents and guardians.
- Lunch time was observed to be eaten at 11:15; the table was set by the children with assistance of the adults and the lunch boxes distributed.
- The meal was eaten in an unhurried manner with the children sitting with their friends in a companionable and sociable manner.
- The adults sat with the children and assisted with the opening of cartons as required and encouraging the disposal of rubbish in the correct bin.
- Toileting was gently supervised by staff members and children were encouraged to independently wash hands, flush toilets and discard of paper towels.
- Childrens coats and bags were stored on child height hooks in the lobby of the school so as to encourage independent dressing and organisation of their arts and crafts for home time.

- Protective boots were available for the children to wear whilst playing in the garden during damp weather.
- Aprons were available for the children to wear during messy play or art activities.
- A rest area corner was situated in a designated corner of the playroom to allow the children to opt out of scheduled activities if they so wished. It was furnished with low couches, matting and soft toys and a wide selection of books for the children's comfort.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Drinagh Playgroup occupied a classroom of a rural national school. It was spacious and had been adapted and suitably furnished to provide an early year setting.
- The playroom was airy and bright with dual aspect windows to allow for natural ventilation and light and more importantly, they provided the children with ongoing views of the surrounding countryside.
- The room was furnished with enough child sized tables and chairs for the children to enjoy tabletop activities and eat their lunches.
- Fixed open shelving units were anchored to the walls to display the wide range of play materials and equipment in an accessible way to the children.
- There were multiple tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as peg boards, threading and small construction bricks.
- Imaginative and pretend play activities included doctor/nurse sets, veterinary items, a hair saloon, office equipment, shops and home corner to allow the children to practice dramatic play in a sociable way with their friends.
- A white board was available for interactive sessions, such as songs and rhymes and road safety information.
- The children had direct access to a large outdoor play area; this included a hard surface area so that the children could practice gross motor skills on the numerous ride on items, such as bikes, balance scooters, tractors and cars.
- A large, grassed garden provided a mud kitchen with utensils, a large construction corner suitably equipped for the children to dig, delve and enjoy the dumpers, trucks and miniature farm vehicles.
- There was a fixed wood tractor for the children to enjoy driving practice and a large swing.
- There were many tyres for the children to practice balance games.
- A wooden gazebo had been installed to provide an outside playroom; this was furnished with couches, books, small construction, and a play kitchen with utensils.

Supporting Relations Around the Children:

- The staff members were observed to be kind, gently and engaging with the children, for example whilst facilitating transitions of activities and organising the lunch break.
- Low tones and good eye contact was maintained, and the children were relaxed, happy and familiar with the staff.
- Some of the staff members had completed training to enhance childcare knowledge and skills, for example, trauma informed practice training as recently as February 2023.
- The service was closely integrated with the local community for example on the day of the inspection as yoga instructor was running short sessions with small groups of the children to demonstrate yoga practices.
- The service had committed to fundraising for local charities for example, pyjama day for autism ‘as I am’.
- A weekly newsletter was issued to parents to remind them of service news, for example the request to send in empty milk cartons to build an igloo.

Programme of Care:

- It was reported by the person in charge that the children followed a play-based programme which allowed flexibility for child led and children’s emergent interests; activities were documented on the large white board with associated photographs for the children to see forthcoming topics. An example of a child’s emergent interest included making chocolate buns and a discussion and show of photographs during circle time of a child’s newly arrived baby cousin.
- Learning records and displayed photographs of the children’s participation in curriculum projects included ‘look at my white teeth’ oral health promotion, make your own pumpkin, all about me, supporting the local mobile library and completing Christmas winter crafts.
- The children were currently participating in nursery rhyme week; this was evident at circle time when an repertoire of nursery rhymes were sung with gusto.
- It was reported by the person in charge that daily photographs of the children were taken whilst participating in activities and immediately sent on individually via a digital application to parents so as to stimulate conversation when the child arrived home and provide opportunity for them to talk about their industrious and fun day.

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

- Drinagh Community Playgroup operated a healthy eating policy and this was adhered to as observed by the healthy, nutritious and varied meals eaten at lunch time.
- All food and drink items were supplied by the parents and guardians.
- Lunches were seen to be nutritious, varied and sufficient for example, fruits, crackers, wraps, meat and cheese sandwiches, yogurts and dips and cheese biscuits.
- The children had easy access to their labelled water bottles which were stored at a drink station to allow the children to drink when they felt thirsty.
- Plates, place mats and cutlery were available to the children as 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:

The service had employed the following to ensure that the children's safety -

- The main door to the school was operated via a buzzer system so as to prevent unauthorized access and stop a child from leaving the premises unsupervised.
- Doors to the office and the adult toilet were also suitable secured to prevent the children accessing unsupervised.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Staff members personal belongings were store out of reach of the children.
- Cables and flexes were not accessible to the children.
- Openable windows were not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.
- Prior to outdoor play the area and equipment were checked for any hazardous items or breakages.

- The front gates were secured so that the children could not access the main road whilst using the playground.

Infection Control:

- The service maintained cleaning schedules and was observed to be clean and well maintained.
- Sanitising units were placed at the entrance of the service and within the playroom.
- Good hand washing practises were observed after outdoor play, messy play, prior to lunch and after toileting.
- There were 2 child sized toilets and 2 wash hand basins situated in the lobby. They were clean and well maintained with toilet tissue, clean step ups and toilet seats available for the children's comfort.
- Hand wash posters promoted the correct hand wash routine.
- Liquid soap and paper towels were available.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water registered within the normal range of 42 degrees Celsius.
- An additional sink unit was installed in the playroom to provide additional facilities for hand washing and clearing up after arts and crafts.
- A wash hand basin in the garden provided additional hand wash facilities.
- The staff members had their own designated toilet alongside the children's facility. This was also clean and well maintained.
- A nappy changing facility was available in the adult toilet for use as required.
- Tissues were available for nose hygiene.
- Lidded and non-contact pedal bins were in operation.

Administration of Medication:

- It was reported that the staff members were familiar with the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a child requiring medications.
- There were currently no children attending the service that required medications.

Fire Safety:

- The fire door was unobstructed.
- Fire cylinders were tethered to the walls.
- In conversation with the person in charge it was reported that staff were familiar with the procedures that are required to be followed in the event of a fire.

Outing:

- It was reported that outings had resumed post Covid-19 pandemic. In conversation it was established that staff members understood the safety procedures that are to be carried out during an outing. It was reported that the children's parents attended so that one-to-one adult child ratios were maintained.

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)

Review of the staff members personal files indicated that 1 staff member had first aid responder (FAR) certification with an expiry date of March 2025. Three members of staff had paediatric first aid which were in date.

(2)(a) & (b)

The first box was stored on a high shelf out of reach of the children but accessible to the staff. The first aid box was suitably equipped.

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 premise.

(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

(a) The service displayed a template in the playroom which indicated that monthly fire drills were carried out. The most recent fire drill took place on the 04 October 2023. There were 13 children present with 3 staff members supervising the event.

(b) A record was in place which detailed the number, type, and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The most recent service had been conducted in January 2023.

(4)
Fire evacuation plans were displayed throughout the service to provide visual guidance of the procedures that are to be followed in the event of a fire.
Staff members were aware of the fire assembly point.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was available. It stipulated that the service was adequately insured to cater for up to 25 children on a sessional basis.

The expiry date was 27 03 2024.