

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC138
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Early Years Educational Centre
-------------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballywilliam, Cobh, Co. Cork
----------------------------	------------------------------

<b>Eircode:</b>	P24 YR44
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Margaret Barry Murphy
-------------------------------------	-----------------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/05/2023
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	67	PM	12
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast & N Reidy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Early Years Educational Centre is a privately run childcare facility, that is registered to cater for children aged two to six years, as well as school age children. Full day, part time and sessional care are provided, with daily opening hours from 7.30am to 6.00pm. This includes daily sessional services, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme.

The early years service operates from a single storey, detached premises in an urban area of Cobh in Co. Cork. It consists of five care rooms, with adjoining or adjacent sanitary facilities for children, an office, staff sanitary facilities and a separate staff cabin beside the main building. There are several interconnecting outdoor play spaces available for children's use, to the side and rear of the premises.

### Staffing

At present, the service employs 17 adults, 15 of whom are involved in the direct care of early years children. This includes four adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme and the registered provider, who is available to provide cover, as required. The company secretary does not work directly with children and a second adult works with school age children only. The 15 adults who work with early years children each 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 the child, safety, premises and facilities. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, company secretary, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 of operating the service and there was a named person who could deputise as required.
  - (b) At all times during the inspection period, the designated person in charge or the named deputy were on the premises.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that two adults had begun working at the service since the previous inspection was undertaken on 2 June 2022, therefore recruitment records in relation to these two adults were reviewed.

- (a) Four written and validated references were on file from a past employer.
  - (b) Not applicable, as the references on file were from past employers.
  - (c) A Garda Vetting Disclosure was on file for each of the two adults.
  - (d) Not applicable, as the two adults in question had not lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six consecutive months or longer.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in respect of the two adults, prior to both adults being appointed and permitted access to the children who attended the service.
- (4) The records provided demonstrated that each of the two adults held a recognised award in childcare, with copies of the qualifications available.

### 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.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) It was observed that an adequate number of adults were responsible for the direct care of the children present.
- (2) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation as follows:

Morning:

Room Name and Age Range of Children	Number of Children Present	Number of Adults Present
Room 1 (3 - 4 years)	9	1
Room 2 (4 - 5 years)	16	2 + 1 AIM support
Room 3 (3 – 5 years)	20	2 + 1 AIM support
Room 4 (3 – 4 ½ years)	13	2 + AIM support
Room 5 (2 – 3 years)	9	2

In the afternoon, there were 12 children, aged to 2 to 4 ½ years in attendance, with four adults responsible for their direct care and supervision.

In addition, the registered provider was available to provide cover as needed, during the morning and afternoon.

(8)

(a) The service was operated with at least two adults present at all times, as indicated through review of the staff roster.

### 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:

- The registered provider advised that up to four daily mealtimes were accommodated at the service; breakfast was facilitated as required, from 7.30am to 9.00am, the mid-morning snack was observed to take place from 11.15am, lunch was typically served at 2.30pm and a final snack was offered at 4.30pm.

- Healthy eating was promoted and this was evidenced through the children’s snacks, which included filled wraps, crackers, rice cakes, yogurts, carrot sticks and fruit such as sliced grapes, apples, raspberries, blueberries, satsumas and bananas.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children both during and outside of the designated mealtimes.
- The adults encouraged the children to use the toilet facilities in an independent manner and offered verbal prompts and reminders in relation to handwashing.
- Tissue boxes were available within the children’s reach, both indoors and outdoors, which supported them to attend to their own respiratory hygiene.
- Staff members were noted to model positive behaviour, through demonstrating patience and kindness towards the children and by providing comfort and reassurance as needed.
- Within their respective care rooms, the children had sufficient space to explore the various materials on offer and to engage in their chosen activities. Outdoor pursuits were also facilitated, with all of the children observed to spend time in the outdoor play areas.

### Programme of activities:

- A play-based curriculum was implemented at the service.
- Language development was promoted through singing and storytelling during adult led activities and through informal discussion during mealtimes and free play.
- There was an emphasis on supporting children to develop self-care and independence skills. For example, children were encouraged to put on their own coats and to put away their lunch boxes and bottles after snack time.
- Each term, child observations were documented in the form of learning stories, which were included in the children’s individual folders, along with samples of their artwork and themed learning.
- Written short term curriculum plans were displayed in the care rooms, while medium and long term plans were maintained on file. It was noted that themes for the current month included transport, travel and entertainment, while topics such as the seaside, holidays and going to ‘big school’ were planned for June.
- In addition, staff members advised that conversations during circle time and free play activities were often indicative of children’s emerging interests and were used to inform subsequent curriculum planning. For example, following a recent discussion about food and restaurants, staff created a ‘drive through’ restaurant with the children, to further explore the topic through imaginary play. Corresponding photographs were available and presented for review.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- Each of the care rooms were appropriately furnished with an adequate amount of child sized tables and chairs, which appeared comfortable and durable.
- Across the care rooms, some of the materials provided were stored and accessible at the children’s eye level, while other play resources were maintained on higher shelving. The inspectors were advised that a selection of the materials displayed at adult height, were made available to the children during free play activities and this was subsequently observed in practice in one of the rooms.
- Age-appropriate equipment stored on low set shelving units or at floor level, included animal figures, hand-held vehicles, dolls, building blocks, connectable shapes, play kitchens, tool benches and play tools, large dolls houses, and an ice cream cart.
- Interest items such as train sets, jigsaws, play kitchen utensils and additional connectable shapes and building blocks, were located on the higher shelves.
- The outdoor play environment featured several interconnecting play spaces, which offered a range of opportunities for active play and exploration;
  - The largest area consisted of a grass surface, with entwining concrete footpaths. There were grass mounds, with incorporated tunnels and slides, and a separate swing set.
  - In an adjoining area, the children had the use of a sand shed, which was equipped with a good selection of hand-held vehicles, along with spades, buckets and a wheelbarrow.
  - A wooden cabin was allocated for use as a sensory room.
  - An additional enclosed area, with a surface of bark chippings and a wooden pirate ship, had been developed since the previous inspection.
  - The outdoor area observed in use by the children who attended room 5 consisted of an overhead canopy with a surface of concrete slabs. There was a variety of toys available, which included a playhouse, cars, scooters, a rocking horse and a toy kitchen.

### 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:

- Upon the inspectors' unannounced arrival, the main entrance door was noted to be secure. This reduced the risk of unauthorised persons accessing the service and reduced the likelihood of a child exiting the premises, while unsupervised.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play areas were secured by a combination of fencing and secured gates.
- Safe storage of cleaning agents was ensured.
- Visibility strips were in place on low lying glass panels, which minimised the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury.
- First aid cabinets were wall mounted and inaccessible to children.
- Fire extinguishers were securely tethered.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were provided at the children's and adults' wash hand basins, which supported effective handwashing.
- Good handwashing practices were noted at key intervals, such as after using the sanitary facilities and following outdoor play activities.
- Children's perishable snacks were refrigerated, which reduced the risk of food spoilage and ensured that such items were maintained within the safe temperature range of 0°C to 5°C.
- A sample review of the cleaning records displayed throughout the service found that said documentation was maintained up to date.
- Staff members were noted to sanitise table tops and sweep the floor, following mealtimes.
- Individual storage, in the form of labelled wall hooks and containers was in place for the children's coats, spare clothing and personal belongings.
- Within the nappy changing room adjacent to Room 5, the children's individual toiletries were clearly labelled and stored out of reach of the children.

- Windows were observed to be open in some of the care rooms, which ensured a supply of natural ventilation. A combination of open windows and mechanical ventilation was provided in the sanitary facilities.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children present.
- The inspectors were informed by the registered provider that none of the children were in receipt of specifically prescribed medication.

### Safe Sleep:

- None of the children in attendance were observed to sleep during the period of inspection.

### Fire Safety:

- There were no fire safety concerns noted.

### Outings:

- Not applicable, as the inspectors were advised that the service did not undertake outings.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

1. The nappy changing area in the sanitary facility allocated for use by Room 1, was not maintained in a clean condition, which increased the risk of cross infection. The underside of the changing mat was visibly dirty and dirt had also accumulated in the corners of the changing unit.
2. There was a visible accumulation of dirt and debris on the play kitchen in the covered outdoor play area .

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. The changing mat and table in the accessible toilet were cleaned and sanitised. Photographic evidence was forwarded to the inspector the day following the inspection. A schedule has been developed to ensure that the changing table and mat are cleaned at the end of each day. A specific staff member has been assigned this task.
2. The play kitchen in the covered play area was disposed of. All items in the outdoor play areas have been washed and sanitised and a cleaning routine has been put in place to ensure regular cleaning.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence to demonstrate that the nappy changing mat and table have been cleaned and sanitised.
2. The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under 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

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was adequately equipped and was maintained in the office, with additional basic supplies stored in wall mounted cabinets in each of the care rooms.
  - (b) The first aid supplies were readily available throughout the hours of operation.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider confirmed that none of the adults who worked at the service held current First Aid Response (FAR) certification. It was acknowledged that four of the adults who worked with early years children held up to date paediatric first aid training.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A date has been arranged over the summer, to have two staff members complete a FAR course. Renewal dates for recertifying staff will be recorded in the office diary and booked well in advance of expiry dates.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the email from the course facilitator, which confirmed that two staff members will attend First Aid Responder training.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation. FAR certification in respect of the two staff members will be assessed at the next inspection.

### 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)
- (a) The fire drills which had been undertaken at the service were recorded and maintained on file. The most recent fire drill conducted was dated 20 April 2023.
  - (b) There was documented evidence of the number and type of the firefighting equipment and wired smoke alarms within the early years service. According to the maintenance records, the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 13 July 2022.
- (4) Fire evacuation notices, which outlined details of the steps to be followed in the event of a fire, were displayed in each of the care rooms.

## Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The maintenance record for the smoke alarm was dated 1 June 2021. Smoke alarms are required to be serviced annually by a reputable fire safety company. It is acknowledged that a certificate of testing for the fire detection and alarm system dated 4 May 2023, was submitted following the inspection.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Maintenance of smoke alarms was carried out the day following the inspection and photographic evidence was forwarded to the inspector. The renewal date for maintenance of all alarms is recorded in the office diary and an annual follow up will be booked yearly.

### Supporting documentation submitted

A certificate of testing for the fire detection and alarm system, dated 4 May 2023, was received.

## Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this regulation has been adequately addressed.