

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC187
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ilen River Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Abbeystrewry Hall, Bridge Street, Skibbereen, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P81 XT53
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Cora O'Donoghue
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	09/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	16
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. O Reilly
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Ilen River Playschool an established privately owned early years service that first opened in 1991 and is under the current registered provider/person in charge since 2022. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged from 2 to 6 years and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is providing an additional part time service as well as a sessional since September 2024. At time of inspection the children were aged between 2 years 6 months to 6 years. Daily opening hours are from 09:00 to 14:00 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates from the first floor of a church community hall located in the centre of Skibbereen town in Co Cork. The service consists of 2 interlinked playrooms on the first floor. One main playroom and the other room allows for more space for the children to play. Toilet facilities are on the ground floor and there is a designated outdoor area beside the premise. The service also has the use of a large hall located on the ground floor of the premise. There is a public car park beside the service providing an adequate set down parking area to allow for the safe arrival and departure of the children from the service.

### Staffing

The 4 staff included the person in charge and a deputy. There was 1 of the 4 staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification 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 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.

## Additional Information

- The registered provider/person in charge agreed to a referral to Better Start, Quality Development service in relation to addressing the non-compliance the service received under Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child.
- The registered provider/person in charge was aware of the referral made to the Fire Department in relation to addressing the non-compliance the service received under Regulation 23, General Safety 1.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider/ 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.

(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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2)

Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 4 staff members and this included the registered provider. The following records were available for the 4 staff:

(a) Of the required 8 references, 5 references were from previous employers and 2 of the 5 references had the required validation.

(b) Of the remaining references, 1 reference was from another source other than a previous employer.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(d) A processed police vetting record was on file for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 4 staff had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

The following vetting records were not available on file on day of inspection.

- There was only 1 reference on file for 2 staff members, when 2 validated references are required for each staff member.
- Evidence of validation for 3 references were not on file for three staff members.

(3)

The references and validations identified above were not obtained prior to staff members commencing work in the service.

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

In the corrective and preventative response received from the registered provider the following records were forwarded:

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(a)(b)

The vetting records not present on day of inspection are now on file in the service.

(3)

All vetting records will be obtained by the registered provider before a person is appointed, assigned or allowed access to, or contact with, a child attending the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(a)(b)

A copy of one reference for two staff members and written evidence that both references were validated was forwarded to the early years inspectorate.

Evidence of the validation of three references for three staff members was forwarded to the early years inspectorate.

(3)

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence

### Summary Comment

The registered provider response and evidence submitted was assessed.

The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b), (3).

## 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(2)

During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

There were 22 children aged between 2 years 6 months and 6 years present in the sessional service with 3 adults in attendance. There were 3 adults in attendance with 16 children in the afternoon. The adult child ratio was 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)(a) to (i)

A sample of 11 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i) inclusive.

## 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:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis.*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis was available and maintained in the service.
- (i) A weekly staff roster was maintained in the service. The staff roster indicated the names of the staff, the arrival and departure times each day.
- (k) The service had records detailing any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. A sample of the accident and incident records reviewed; each had been counter signed by the child’s parent to evidence that the information had been relayed.

## 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

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- The children had access to their water bottles which were stored on a table at child height and allowed the children to help themselves to a drink when they felt thirsty.

- Children’s toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. A staff member was observed supervising and assisting each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting and outdoor play.
- Children’s belongings such as coats and bags were stored on hooks in the entrance hall area

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties.
- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were familiar with the routine.
- Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in various activities including tidying up.
- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment. The staff offered appropriate assistance by the adults, for example, the children were given plates and were observed opening lunch boxes, cartons as required.

### Physical and Material Environment

- The playroom was furnished with an adequate number of tables and child sized chairs, and fixed open shelving displaying range of play materials and equipment for the children.
- There were multiple tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as peg boards, threading and small construction items.
- The children were observed playing outdoors where the children were furnished with a number of push and ride on toys that encouraged the children to master, gross motor skill play.

### Non-Compliance Information

- The storage of unused play equipment on the floor of the main playroom impeded the children’s free floor space area to play. Many containers of unused play equipment were noted throughout the room, especially around the perimeter. This did not allow the children to freely access the space or fully engage in child directed play.

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

In the corrective and preventative response received from the registered provider the following was stated:

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

- The registered provider spoke with the hall committee; they agreed to provide a storage unit on the premises for the storage of play equipment, (seasonal) not been used. The registered provider has been assured by the committee this will be in place by the start of the preschool year 27 August 2025.

## Supporting documentation submitted

- The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

## Summary Comment

- This issue remains outstanding as regulatory compliance has not been achieved. The registered provider has agreed to send photographic evidence to the early years inspectorate when the storage unit is installed.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## 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

- The children's parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- It was observed on day of inspection that perishable food items in the children's lunches were stored in the service fridge located in the community kitchen on the ground floor. The children's perishable foods were stored in a container in the fridge and a staff member transported the perishable foods in the container to the first floor prior to the children's snack time.

### 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 inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the child.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playrooms in operation.
- Shortly after the inspector arrived at the premise, it was noted, there was no thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets, nappy changing facility and adult toilet in the service. The registered provider/person in charge informed the inspector that she forgot to turn on the switch that morning that is responsible for heating the water. The switch for the warm water was turned on. Inspector checked the water later in the morning and there was thermostatically controlled hot water in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets, nappy changing facility and adult toilet in the service. This issue was addressed at time of inspection.

##### Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom and in the children's and adult toilet facilities. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and following outdoor play.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- Openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised before snack time.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. On day of inspection, the emergency fire exit route was obstructed. There was a gate in place at the top and bottom of the stairwell that led to the two playrooms which are both located on the first floor of the building.

A referral dated the 11 June 25 was sent to the Fire Safety Department.

2. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting.

### Infection Control:

3. The flow of water from the taps in the wash hand basins was not regular and at times there was no water running from the taps especially in the wash hand basin located in one of the playrooms located on the first floor. It was observed on day of inspection that most of the hand washing for the children occurred at this wash hand basin for example before both food snacks and after messy play.
4.
  - (a) Cobwebs were visible on the ceilings and walls in the two playrooms.
  - (b) Dirt and dust were evident on the skirting boards of the big hall located on the ground floor.
 To reduce the potential risk of cross infection, a deep clean of the two playrooms and community hall are required.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The Fire Safety Officer had not reviewed the service on completing this report. On receipt of the written referral the Early Years Inspectorate had received a telephone call from the Fire Safety Officer stating he will review, when the service reopens on the 27 August 2025.
2. The process of re-vetting of one adult has been received by the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána. The service will review the staff garda vetting records annually to ensure that all garda vetting records are updated on time and every three years for staff and the registered provider.

##### Infection Control:

3. The registered provider stated that she has emailed and spoken to the hall committee and they have replied in writing to her that they will review the water pressure to the wash hand basin located in the playroom on the first floor of the building.
4. (a)(b)  
The registered provider stated that she has e-mailed and spoken to the hall committee. They have replied in writing stating a deep clean of the community hall will take place during the summer months that will include the two playrooms on the first floor, removing the cobwebs from the walls and high ceilings. The

deep clean will also include removing the dirt and dust evident on the skirting boards of the big hall located on the ground floor. The work will be completed by the time the service opens on the 27 August 25.

## **Supporting documentation submitted**

### **General Safety:**

1. The fire officer telephoned the Early Years Inspectorate advising that a review of the premise would take place when the service reopens on the 27 August 25.
2. The Early Years Inspectorate received written evidence that the Garda vetting application form had been received and was being processed by the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána.

### **Infection Control:**

3. A copy of the email from the registered provider to the hall committee outlining the low water pressure in the wash hand basin in the playroom and the hall committee replied in writing stating that the issue would be addressed prior to the early years service reopening on the 27 August 2025.
4. (a)(b) A copy of the email from the RP to the hall committee outlining cobwebs in the playrooms and the dust and dirt in the hall. The hall committee replied in writing stating that a deep clean is planned of the playrooms and hall prior to the early years service reopening on the 27 August 2025.

## **Summary Comment**

- Non compliances 1.2.3.4 remain outstanding as regulatory compliance has not been achieved. The registered provider has agreed to send written or photographic evidence to the early years inspectorate when each issue 1-4 has been fully addressed prior to reopening on the 27 August 2025. 1.2.3.4 will be reviewed on the next inspection.

### 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) The registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that one staff held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position on the premises

(b) The first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(b) The first aid box was not suitably equipped, as the following items were stored in the first aid box on day of inspection. Medication for adult use and a tub of nappy cream.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that the adult medication and the tub of nappy cream have been removed from the first aid box. Going forward, the required first aid equipment will only be stored in the first aid box for the service.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider response was assessed.

The service was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 25 (2)(b)

## 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) A record of monthly fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 4 June 2025
  - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 16 December 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

## 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 to indicate that up to 22 children were insured to attend the service. The expiry date was 27 March 2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time day care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.