

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC187		
Name of Service:	Ilen River Playschool		
Address of Service:	Abbeystrewry Hall, Bridge Street, Skibbereen, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P81 XT53		
Name of Registered Provider:	Cora O'Donoghue		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	03/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Social Work Dept. Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen 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

Ilen River Pre-School is registered to provide a private early years care and education for children aged from 2 to 6 years on a sessional basis.

The service operates from the first floor of a church community hall, which is situated in the centre of Skibbereen town in west Cork.

The service consists of 2 interlinked playrooms, toilet facilities, use of the large ground floor hall and an outdoor playground.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children and is assisted by 2 childcare professionals.

A relief staff member has been employed to cover as required.

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training at Level 5 were on file for the adults.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was issued on the 03 October in relation to Safety, as there was no adult available on the premises with First Aid Responder training (FAR).

The registered provider reverted the following day to submit information to address the non-compliance, details of which are described in the report under Regulation 25 – First Aid.

A referral to Better Start Quality Development was initiated to provide the new registered provider and newly appointed staff members assistance with room development and enhancing quality childcare practices.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 proposed change in respect of times of operation of the service. This was identified when reviewing the children's attendance register and from a letter available to parents, detailing that the service accommodated children from 09:00am.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the times of operation have been changed.
A copy of the change in circumstance form was submitted to evidence that the changes had been completed.

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)*

(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 was the person in charge and worked directly with the children. An additional adult had been designated to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were on the premises on the day to facilitate the inspection. Inspection of the staff roster indicated that both adults were present on the premise whilst the service was operating.

(2)(a)

There were 4 adults attached to the service, this included the registered provider, 2 childcare professionals and a relief staff member. Each of their personal files were reviewed and the following information was found -

There were 4 written past employer references available.

(2)(b)

There were 3 written references from sources that the registered provider considered to be reputable.

(c)

There were 4 up to date Garda vetting disclosures on file.

(4)

Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) in childcare training were at Level 5 were available for 4 adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)&(b)

A member of staff did not have a second written reference on file.

The 5 written references available did not have records of validation attached.

(d)

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

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

(2)(a) & (b) & (d)

The registered provider stated that an additional reference had been secured and the 5 outstanding records of validation have been obtained. In addition, the outstanding police vetting was submitted with the appropriate translation.

The above information was scanned to evidence that the non-compliances had been suitably addressed.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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

The following policies were reviewed and found to be inadequate –

1. Whilst there was a policy on infection control, it did not set out specific measures for the prevention of cross infection; infection control of managing outbreaks of infectious diseases including reporting notifiable infectious diseases to Tusla.
2. The behaviour management policy did not state how support is offered to staff on how to support children’s behaviours and emotional needs.
3. Although there was policy on the management of accidents and incidents it did not set out how notifiable incidents will be submitted to the early years inspectorate, or that a risk assessment is carried out following an incident /accident to prevent further events.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

1.2. & 3.

The registered provider stated that the above policies were revised and amended to contain the required information.

The policies were submitted to evidence that the non-compliance had been addressed.

Summary Comment

Documents in the form of scanned policies were submitted to the early years office, they were examined and found to be adequate.

The Requirement has been met.

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)

There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3)

There were 22 children aged from 2.8 months to 4 years attending on a sessional basis with 3 adults in attendance.

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)
Of the 20-enrolment available, a total of 10 were examined. The following elements of Regulation 15 were found to be complaint, (a), (c) and (f).

Non-Compliance Information

The following information was not completed on the enrolment forms reviewed –

- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service was not included on 7 forms;
- (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 was not included on 2 forms;
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child was not entered on 4 forms;
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner was not completed on 3 forms;
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child was not completed on 7 forms;
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency was not completed on 2 forms.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

The registered provider stated that the children’s enrolment forms have been updated to contain the required information, and that going forward the forms shall be checked prior to be being placed on file.
A sample of the forms were submitted.

Summary Comment

Submitted documentation was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.
The Requirement has been met.

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) name, position, qualifications, & experience of the PIC, employees, unpaid workers & contractors:

(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

(h) A register was maintained to detail the children’s attendance on a daily basis.

(i) Staff rosters were maintained in the attendance register.

(k) The service had an accident/incident recording logbook that had been developed by an agency affiliated to childcare settings. The most recent entry was dated 06 September 2023; this involved a minor incident and the information had been duly relayed to the parent as evidenced by the parental signature.

Non-Compliance Information

(a) A member of staff did not have a record of experience on file.

(j) An administration of medication book was not made available on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation

(a)&(j)

The registered provider stated that the outstanding record of experience for an adult was obtained and that the medication book was found on file after the inspection.

Photographs of the documents were scanned to evidence that the issues had been correctly addressed.

Summary Comment

The information was reviewed and found to be satisfactory.

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

- The parents and guardians supplied their children with all their food and drink items whilst attending the service.
- The lunch meal was eaten at approximately 11:20am, a child as designated to assist with the distribution of plates and lunch boxes.
- Lunchtime was unhurried and the children were given ample time to finish their meals.
- Adults were observed assisting the children to organise their lunches and open cartons.
- Toileting was supervised by staff members as the facility was situated on the ground floor. Children were encouraged to independently wash hands.
- Childrens belongings such as coats and bags were stored on hooks in the lobby on the ground floor. They were assisted to put their coats and jackets on for outdoor play.
- The service had developed a rest corner in the large playroom so that the children could rest if they so wished.

Physical and Material Environment –

- Ilen River Playschool was situated on the first floor of a church community hall dating circa 1845. It comprised of 2 interlinked playrooms namely the playroom and the quiet room.
- Both rooms were furnished and equipped with child sized tables and chairs and age-appropriate play materials and equipment.
- The rooms had low open display units storing equipment and materials that the children could easily access and practice fine motor skills with items such as the peg boards, puzzles, jigsaws, threading boards, matching games.
- Imaginative play materials included a well-equipped home corner, dolls, buggies and dress up items.
- The quiet room accommodated arts and crafts, playmats for cars and trucks and garage. There were soft toys and an 'L' shaped bench for the children to sit and peruse the many picture books.

- The rest area in the playroom was equipped with jigsaw matting and monochrome cubic poufs and couches.
- A large collage depicting autumnal scenes adorned the playroom, intertwined with the pictures of mushrooms and hedgehogs and the children's photographs.
- The children had access to the outdoor playground which consisted of a hard surfaced yard which allowed for the children to practice gross motor skill activities such as ride on toys, ball and hoops which were stored in the shed.

Supporting Relations Around the Children

- The staff members were observed comforting and settling children who were visibly upset.
- A parent was permitted to wait on the ground floor whilst a child was being settled.
- Staff members facilitated some play and caring practices such as supervision of toileting and organising lunches.
- Communication with parents about service issues was conducted via digital applications both in group and individual form.

Implementation of the Programme of Care

- In conversation with the registered provider, it was stated that service implemented a play-based programme.

Non-Compliance Information

Supporting Relations Around the Children.

1. Staff members did not sit and eat with the children to encourage a sociable, relaxed atmosphere and role model the correct table etiquette.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

1. The registered provider stated that the staff members now sit with the children during lunch and staff members have trained to continue this practice.

A photograph of the adults sitting with the children whilst they ate their lunch was submitted

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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

- Ilen River Playschool started in their healthy eating policy that parents and guardians were to provide their children with all their food and drink requirements.
- Most of the lunches eaten were observed to be healthy, nutritious and suitable. For example, there was sandwiches, wraps, seasonal fruits, yogurts and cereal bars.
- The children had access to their water bottles which were stored in a large crate in the playroom. They were observed helping themselves to their drinks to counter thirst.

Non-Compliance Information

1. During the lunch meal it was observed that some children had unhealthy and unvaried food items, for example 1 child had a packet of waffles and another had only berries and crisps.
2. Blackcurrant juices were observed in the water bottles.

It is recommended that children shall be offered sufficient servings which must include appropriate servings of protein, starch, dairy, vegetables/fruit and iron. Only water or milk is recommended for drinks

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

1.& 2.

The registered provider stated that the healthy eating policy has been reinforced to the parents and that only water and juice drinks are permitted whilst the children are in the service.

Summary Comment

Photographs of healthy lunches were submitted to indicate that the non-compliance was being addressed.

The Requirement has been met.

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 door to the building was suitably secured so that the children would not be able to leave the playrooms unsupervised.
- Emergency exits were unobstructed.
- The openable windows on the first floor had child safety latches applied to prevent a child from climbing out of the window.
- Cleaning products were out of reach of the children.
- The stairwell was well lit and provided 2 handrails both at adult height and child height for the children's safety.
- The surface of the treads was wooden and non-slip.

Infection Control:

- Sanitising units were placed in both the lobby and in the care rooms for the adults and out of reach of the children for adult use.
- Hand washing practise were observed prior to the children eating their lunches and after using the toilet.
- Toilet facilities included 2 adult sized toilets equipped with step ups for the children's comfort. A vanity unity encased 2 wash hand basins. The facility was clean and well maintained.
- There was an additional hand basin in the quiet room for clean up after messy play.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water was available and registered at 32.3 degrees Celsius throughout the service.
- Liquid soap, and paper towels were available for hand washing purposes. Hand wash posters prompted the correct hand washing technique.
- Tissues were available for nasal hygiene.
- A fridge was available on the ground floor kitchen for the storage of the children's perishable items of their lunches.
- The staff members had a designated toilet.

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 and familiar with the fire assembly points

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The gates leading from the car park were open for most of the inspection, despite signage requesting that they were to be closed. This posed a risk of unauthorised persons accessing the grounds of the service during operation.
2. The door to the ground floor kitchen was open and posed a risk of the children having access to potentially hazardous kitchen items such as
3. The children had access to a staff members bag which was stored on a chair in the playroom.
4. There were 2 space heaters on the premises that are not permitted in childcare settings. In addition, the heaters had broken legs/supports and their cables posed a trip hazard.

Infection Control:

The following issues posed a risk of cross infection.

5. The large pedal bin in the quiet room was not working.
6. The play mat in the playroom was stained and dirty.
7. There were 2 microfibre cloths stored on the quiet room wash hand basin.
8. In the toilet facility an unused changing unit had a stock of barrier creams and wipes that were not labelled with the child's name.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider stated the following –

1. New gates have been installed which provided adequately security and the children cannot access either the public car park or the main road.

A photograph of the new gates was submitted.

2. The door to the kitchen is now secured.

A photograph of the secured kitchen door was submitted.

3. The adult's bags are now stored safely on a high hook inside a cupboard door out of reach of the children.

A photograph of the stored bags was submitted.

4. Space heaters have been removed and radiators with covers now provide the required heat.

A photograph of the radiators was submitted.

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Infection Control:

5. Only on-contact pedal bins are in use in the service.

A photograph showing pedal bins was submitted.

6. The play mat has been cleaned and going forward will be checked and cleaned as required.

A photograph of the mat was issued.

7. The microfibre cloths have been removed and only paper towels will be used going forward.

8. Barrier creams that were placed in the changing mat area have been discarded.

A photograph of the area was submitted to evidence that the issue had been addressed.

Summary Comment

Documentation in the form of photographs were reviewed and found to adequately meet the Requirements.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

At the time of the inspection an adult was not on the premises with first aid responder certification on file (FAR). An immediate Notice Action was issued on the day.

(2)(a) & (b)

There was a wall mounted first aid box available which was out of reach of the children however, it was not adequately stocked, for example most of the items reviewed were found to be dusty and out of date; an individual wrapped sterile unmedicated wound dressings had an expiry date of 2010 and the sterile eye pads had an expiry date of 2012.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action & Supporting Documentation Submitted

(1)

The registered provider responded to the issued Immediate Action Notice within the 24-hour timeframe on the 04 October 2023 and stated that a first aid responder course had been booked for the 28 October.

An email confirming the course booking details was submitted, it was reviewed and found to be an adequate response.

Summary Comment

The Requirement has been met.

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 service maintained a record of their monthly fire drills on a template which was displayed in the playroom. The last drill was carried out on the 02 October 2023.
- (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 was conducted whilst the inspection was in process – 03 October 2023.
- (4)
- A fire evacuation plan was displayed in the playroom which provided details of the route to be taken in the event of a fire. Staff members were familiar with fire assembly points.

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 on file to indicate that up to 22 children were adequately insured to attend the service on a sessional basis.

The expiry date was 27 March 2024