

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC202
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Name of Service:	Kilmeen Early Years School
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Address of Service:	Kilmeen National School, Kilmeen, Rossmore, Clonakilty, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P85 YV21
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Name of Registered Provider:	Collette Fraser
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, West Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly
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
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Description of service

Kilmeen Early Years School is a registered privately owned early years service in operation since 2015. The current registered provider took over the operation of the service in August 2022. The service provides education and care to children from 2 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional or part time care and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. At time of inspection the children were aged between 2 years 6 months and 6 years. While the registered opening hours are from 09:00 to 13:00 hours each day. There is a school aged care service, breakfast club from 08:00 to 09:00 hours each morning and a school aged care service from 14:00 hours in the afternoon each day Monday to Friday.

The premises is situated within the national school in the rural village of Kilmeen, Clonakilty Co Cork.

The service operates from a large classroom within the school building. There are adequate toilet facilities for both staff and children. The children have access to their own secured outdoor play area within the grounds of the national school.

Staffing

At time of inspection, there were 3 adults employed at the early years setting involved in the direct care of the children who attend and this includes the registered provider. Each of the 3 adults hold a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The 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.

(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 person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived on the premises and remained for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

The recruitment records in relation to 3 adults who were employed at the service were the subject of the inspection.

(a) Of the 10 required references, 6 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 4 references were from another source other than a previous employer with the required records of validation on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 3 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as no adult had resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The 3 adults attached to the service had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education with copies of the relevant qualifications on file.

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) A sufficient number of adults were observed to work with the children who attended the service.

(2) At the time of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of regulation.

There were 19 children with 3 adults in attendance in the morning. There were 10 children in attendance in the part time service with three adults present until 12:30pm and then two adults for the remaining 30 minutes.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Electronic records of the children's attendance including the time they arrived and departed from the service each day were individually recorded under the child's name in the service electronic application device.
- (i) Electronic records of each staff members arrival and departure time daily to the service were maintained.

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:

- On inspection, a relaxed and calm environment was provided for the children, and it was observed that the adults spoke kindly and offered encouragement to each child.
- Staff were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged.
- Children were delegated to be helpers in turn on a daily basis to carry out tasks such as laying the table, fetching and distributing lunches from the fridge and providing cutlery.
- Lunchtime was a sociable and unhurried and staff members sat with the children and were actively assisting with opening yogurt cartons and peeling fruits.
- As it was science week, the children had been invited into the school classroom across the corridor to see some science experiments performed by the national school children. At snack time, the staff encouraged the children to talk about the experiments they had observed. The children's language, mathematical and imaginary skills, along with cognitive and social skills were all enhanced for having attended this creative activity.
- The children had access to their labelled water bottles which were stored on a trolley in the playroom.
- The children were largely independent using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet when required.
- Children had sufficient space to move about freely indoors and outdoors.
- Children presented as relaxed, happy, and familiar with their environment.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The room was spacious, child-friendly, bright, and well-presented. The room opened directly into the outdoor play area.
- The indoor environment of the playroom was laid out in defined interest areas, including home/construction area, painting, and crafts area and tabletop activities area.

- There was a well-equipped home corner with dress up and items to encourage pretend play.
- Tabletop activities included fine motor skill materials such as peg boards, jig saws and puzzles and children had access to small and large construction items.
- The layout of the rooms promotes the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- A quiet corner was in place to facilitate quiet time. A supply of soft padded mats and cushions were available for the children to sit and relax. The quiet area was beside the book area where books were displayed at child height. Post mid-morning snack, staff encouraged the children to pick a book of choice and later at storybook time the well-known book the Gruffalo was read to the children.
- There was a variety of materials and defined interest areas in the outdoor areas, multi-sensory play experiences were provided that included a mud kitchen and a wall mounted music and sound area. There were raised beds and evidence of planting that had taken place.
- Wood bark mulch had been installed on much of the play surface for the children's safety and comfort while playing with a tunnel made from tyres and wood and a walking wall. The remaining surface of the outdoor area was covered was covered in tarmac for ride on and push toys.

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 service had a healthy eating policy in place, and this was closely adhered to as observed by the healthy, varied and nutritious lunches observed being eaten by the children. For example, sandwiches, wraps, rice cakes, chopped fruits and vegetables.
- There were generous supplies of cutlery and plates.
- It was observed that the children attending for the additional hour on a part time basis enjoyed an additional lunch when the sessional children had departed.

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 their own independent entrance door within the national school building. This was observed secure when not in use on day of inspection. This minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises and reduced the likelihood of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was securely enclosed by a combination of the school building on three sides and a high metal fence and gate with a lock at adult height.
- All of the available cleaning agents were stored out of children's reach on day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Throughout the service, wash hand basins were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towel dispensers, for hygienic hand washing and drying. Handwashing by the children was observed before the two food breaks and after toileting.
- Lidded, foot pedal operated bins were available for waste and disposal of single used papers towels throughout the service.
- A fridge was situated within the room for the safe storage of the children's perishable items of their lunches.

Safe Sleep:

- Children attending on a part time basis had access to individual floor padded mats and bed linen when required. No child was observed sleeping at time of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Children had access to number of electrical cables located under the administration desk in the playroom. Due to the potential safety risk, children should have no access to any cables.
2. One cupboard located at child height was not adequately secured in the playroom as an electrical iron and sandwich toaster were stored there. Due to the potential safety risk, children should have no access to any electric cabled equipment.

Infection Control:

3. There was play equipment, paint tins and staff coats stored in the adult toilet. Due to the potential risk of cross infection, items should not be loosely stored in toilet facilities. A declutter of the adult toilet facility is required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In the corrective and preventative response (CAPA) the following was stated:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. All electronics with cables attached have been moved to a newly purchased storage unit. Which ensures they are out of reach of children. The cables feed through the back of the unit which covers the cables and insures they are inaccessible to the children. A second small drawer unit has been installed underneath the desk to make the area of the wall with plugs also inaccessible to the children. These new storage units are permanent fixtures. Should they need replacing in years to come we will ensure they are replaced with another unit which will also conceal the cables.
2. A safety (child) lock has been attached to the cupboard to ensure children cannot access this cupboard going forward. The child proof lock will stay in place during the hours of operation. Should it break, the service will replace it. We will ensure any equipment with a cable going forward will be stored in this press to ensure the children cannot access same.

Infection Control:

3. The staff bathroom has been fully decluttered. All equipment is now stored within the closed storage cupboard. Paint tins are now stored in a separate shed on the school premises belonging to the primary school. Staff coats have been stored within their baskets in the classroom – out of reach of the children. We had a large clear out and made space within the cupboard for items that were previously stored on top of the cupboards. All items have a designated place within the cupboard which will stop clutter building up outside of the cupboard. All staff have been instructed that the staff bathroom is no longer to be used for storage unless it is an item that belongs to the closed cupboard e.g. cleaning products.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the new storage unit in place in the classroom was submitted to the early years department and deemed satisfactory.

2. Photographic evidence of the childproof lock on the cupboard was submitted to the early years department and deemed satisfactory.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence of the decluttered staff toilet was submitted to the early years department and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23 General Safety and Infection Control of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 member held current up to date training and one staff member held current up to date paediatric first aid 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 and conspicuous position in the playroom.

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

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 fire fighting 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) An electronic record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 4/11/2024
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced in September 2024 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in October 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

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for 22 children attending until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover. The service also detailed the number of children covered for the school aged breakfast club is 22 children and for the maximum number of school aged care children in the afternoon is 24 children.