

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC263				
Name of Service:	Watergrasshill Preschool and Afterschool Care				
Address of Service:	Ballylegan, Watergrasshill, Co. Cork				
Eircode:	T56 X563				
Name of Registered Provider:	Minna Murphy				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	23/01/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>11</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	11	PM	N/A
AM	11	PM	N/A		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 5DDY				
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel				
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

Watergrasshill Preschool and Afterschool Care is a sessional early years service providing the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme between the hours 9.30 am and 12.30 pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. It is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 years to 6 years of age, children currently attending are aged from 3 years to 5 years of age. A breakfast club is in operation in the morning from 8.00 am until 9.15 am and a School Age Care service is provided from 2.00 pm until 5.00 pm.

The service is located on the main street in the village of Watergrasshill, North East of County Cork. It operates from two rooms in the local community centre; small hall and a playroom. The service has use of the kitchen and a large sports hall, adult and children's toilets are available in the main corridor. A secure outdoor play area is situated at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are three adults working in the service, one of whom works with the School Age Service in the afternoon. In addition, a student is on placement one day a week. The registered provider was not working in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations and 9, 11, 15, 16,19, 23, 25 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 Deputy Manager, named person, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
 - (a) The Deputy Manager was the person in charge and a named person was available to deputise, if required.
 - (b) The Deputy Manager and the named person were on the premises when the inspector arrived and were available at all times while the early years children were present.
 - (c) Both adults, working directly with the children, were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Recruitment files for the three adults working in the service and the student were reviewed;
 - (a) There were six references and validations from previous employers.
 - (b) There were two references from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from National Vetting Bureau were on file for three of the adults working in the service. The student did not require a Garda Vetting Disclosure.
 - (d) Two international police disclosures were available for one adult who had resided outside of Ireland for six months consecutively as an adult.
- (4) Both employees working directly with early years children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The third adult did not require qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(b) Two validations were missing in respect of the two references from sources other than previous employers.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statements were made by the registered provider:

(2) (b) The two validations have been added to the adult's recruitment file.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (b) Two validations were received on 28 February 2024.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2) (b) has been addressed.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the early years children at all times.

(3) There were eleven children in attendance with two adults in the morning session.

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) All sixteen records of the children attending the pre-school service were reviewed. Twelve records were found to contain the relevant particulars of (a) to (i) above.

Non-Compliance Information

- (e) Authorisation for collection was missing in respect of three children's pre-school records.
- (f) One record was missing in respect of one child in regard to details of any illness, disability, allergy or medical need.
- (g) One record was missing in respect of a child in regard to the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- (h) Three immunisation records were missing in respect of three children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (e) Authorisation particulars have been added to each child's record.
- (f) The details of illness, disability, allergy or medical needs have been added to the child's pre-school record.
- (g) The General Practitioner's (GP) details were added to the child's pre-school record.
- (h) All immunisations are now recorded for each pre-school record.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (e) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
- (f) A copy of the illness, disability, allergy or medical needs were received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (g) A copy of the child's GP details was received in the office of the inspectorate.
- (h) A copy of the immunisations was received in the office of the inspectorate for each child.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 15 (e), (f), (g) & (h) have been addressed.

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:

- (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

- (1)
- (j) Staff in the service stated that no medication had been administered, this was evidenced on a software application available on the service’s tablet. Administration of Medications forms were available if required.
- (k) There were two records of accidents and incidents presented to the inspector, both had been signed by the parents and contained the necessary particulars including the details of the first aid administered at the time of the accident/incident.

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:

- Snacks provided by parents/guardians were served at 10.30 am and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included, bite sized pieces of fruit and vegetables, filled sandwiches and crackers.
- Water was available at all times; individual children’s bottles were stored in a basket on a table, easily within reach of the children.
- Plates were provided for the children to put their snack on, and cutlery was available, if required.

- Children were given time to eat without being rushed. The children who had finished were able to avail of transitional activities.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently, children's dignity and privacy was respected with children able to close the individual cubicle doors. An adult was available to provide assistance, if required.
- Staff were observed encouraging and supporting the children to manage their self-help skills independently. Examples included the children taking off their shoes/boots and putting on their indoor shoes on arrival and putting on their coats at home time.
- A rest/quiet area was available which furnished with a rocking chair, 12 individual vinyl squares for children to sit on. In addition, a wigwam with 4 large soft cushions was available creating a semi-private area away from noisy activities. A selection of age and stage appropriate books were available nearby. Children were observed making use of the area throughout the morning.
- The children were observed moving freely, exploring the different areas in the small hall, playroom and the sports hall where they could play individually or in small or large groups.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff stated a key person approach is in operation with the key person responsible for writing monthly observations. These were presented to the inspector and were noted to be linked to Aistear the early years curriculum; they included information on how staff planned to extend the children's extended. Staff also stated that they organised meetings with the parents in November 2023 and for May 2024, details of the meetings in November were presented to the inspector. All of the information gathered gave staff valuable information on the child's needs, interests, likes and dislikes.
- Staff sat with the children and engaged in conversations during snack and table top activities, listening to the children and using strategies including open questioning and modelling and demonstrating to extend the children's thinking and learning. The atmosphere was noted to be relaxed and happy.
- A child's birthday was celebrated with staff creating a sense of belonging and wellbeing. The child wore a birthday crown and took great pride in sharing a birthday cake which been brought in by the parent. The child was given the opportunity to take the lead in activities which followed the party.
- Photographs of each individual child with their families along with written text including the family member's names and a description of what the children liked to do were visible on the wall in the Playschool room. These were placed at the child's eye level and helped to create a sense of identity and belonging for each child in the service.

- Children’s behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by staff, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- The service uses a software package to provide information to parents in relation to activities and general information. Examples were presented to the inspector including information on the introduction of emotional literacy along with seasonal books in use by staff and children. Staff stated they also use text messaging and give verbal feedback at drop off and collection times.
- Details of regular staff meetings with management were furnished to the inspector with recent dates of the meeting noted as November 2023 and January 2024. Topics included planning activities for the children, staff training and updating of policies.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The children had access to the Small hall care room, Playroom, Corridor and the Sports hall. These areas were noted to provide playful opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all areas of development. The equipment available in the Small hall care room was stored on low-level shelving which encouraged independence and provided choice for the children. Examples included construction materials and puzzles encouraging cognitive development along with musical instruments and arts/craft providing opportunities for exploring creative development. Equipment in both the Small hall care room and the Playschool room provided opportunities for pretend and imaginative play and included equipment such as a cooker, sink, microwave and fridge, airport, dolls house with furniture and people and rail tracks and trains. The children were observed in the Sports hall running, jumping and kicking balls practising their gross motor skills.
- Suitable age and stage appropriate tables and chairs were provided in the Small hall care room and in the Playroom for the pre-school children.
- An outdoor play area was available. However, due to the stormy weather it was not in use on the day of inspection. It was located at the front of the service. Equipment available in the outdoor area included a playhouse, two mud kitchens and a sink which was not in use. A selection of outdoor equipment was stored in a locked outdoor shed and was noted to consist of balance bikes, covered sand and water troughs, hula hoops, balls, obstacle course and basketball nets, providing opportunities for gross motor skills and sensory play.

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 entrance of the service was secured upon arrival and was operated with a buzzer intercom system, preventing unauthorised adults from gaining entry. Staff were observed to have personal fobs to open the door from the inside preventing children leaving unsupervised.
- The window openings were located high up on the walls and were inaccessible to the children, ensuring no child could exit from them.
- The toys and play equipment in the indoor area appeared in good condition.
- Heavy furniture was anchored preventing it from tipping over.
- The flexes of the kettle, microwave and toaster were in good condition and stored in the kitchen, out of reach of the children.
- All storage cupboards in the small hall care room were locked and the key was inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach in a locked cupboard in the care room.
- The outdoor area was secured with a stone wall and new metal gates had been installed at the front of the service since the last inspection. The gates were secured with sliding bolts and staff stated that the gates are secured while the children are out playing to ensure that unauthorised adults cannot enter the outdoor play area or that no child could leave the area unsupervised. In addition, barriers were in place to ensure the children could not enter the area where the large outdoor waste bins were stored. A locked shed was available for the storing of the outdoor toys when not in use.

Infection Control:

- Upon arrival children were observed removing their outdoors shoes and boots and replacing them with indoor slippers reducing the spread of infection and bacteria.
- Coats were hung on a hanger on a mobile rack away from the floor area.
- Staff were observed cleaning the tables after food and activities with disinfectant and a disposable cloths.
- Children and adults had access to dispensing soap, dispensing paper towels and a lined, lidded, sealed pedal operated bin for the disposal of waste.

- Disposable aprons and gloves were available, if required. There were no children requiring nappy changing on the day of inspection.
- Perishable food was observed being stored in the fridge in the kitchen, preventing it from spoiling.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was in date, the date of expiry was recorded as 01/2026, the medication was stored in a locked cupboard.

Safe Sleep:

- A rest/quiet area was available, no child was observed resting during the session.

Fire Safety:

- The fire doors in the hall and at the front entrance were fitted with push bar mechanisms aiding the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- The fire extinguisher in the hall was secured to the wall.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) The inspector observed a bait box on the floor of the corridor, close to where the children were playing, posing a safety risk as there may have been residue left behind from which the children could have come into contact.
- (2) Two sharp screw points were protruding from the front of a mud kitchen in the outdoor area, posing a safety issue should a child's hand come into contact with the sharp point of the screws.
- (3) Two newly fitted double fire doors located in the sports hall, posed a safety risk from children being able to access the push bar mechanisms and potentially leave the building unsupervised. In conversation, staff stated that the previous fire doors had just been replaced in December 2023 and this was an oversight. This non-compliance was also found on the previous inspection on 1 November 2021 in which the registered provider had stated, in their Corrective and Preventive Actions, that the doors had been fitted with alarms which the staff activated upon arrival. This was not found on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- (4) The temperature of the thermostatically controlled water in use in the four wash hand basins in the sanitary area was recorded under 10°C, staff stated this had previously been reported but has not been addressed. Thermostatically controlled water is required to facilitate hygienic handwashing.

Fire Safety:

- (5) The fire door in the corridor, nearby where the children were observed playing, was obstructed by a chair. The chair had been placed behind the push bar to prevent the door from being opened from the inside, posing a safety risk should the adults and children be required to evacuate the building quickly in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were made by the registered provider:

General Safety:

- (1) The bait box has removed to a safe place, inaccessible by the children. The community council have been informed that the bait boxes cannot be left where the children can have access to them.
- (2) The sharp screws have been removed from the kitchen and no longer pose a safety risk to the children. Outdoors toys and materials have been added to the risk assessment.
- (3) Alarms have been fitted to the two newly fitted fire doors and will be monitored when the children are in the hall.

Infection Control:

- (4) Hot water is now available in the four taps in the sanitary area. Due to the cost of the metered hot water, an alternative means of heating the water is being looked at by the service.

Fire Safety:

- (5) The chair was removed and the fire door has been secured.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- (1) (2) The statements from the registered provider have been accepted.
- (3) A photograph of the alarms on both sets of doors was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- (4) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Fire Safety:

- (5) A photograph of the fire door secured with a device, easily removed by adults in the event of an emergency, was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) One staff member had evidence of recent First Aid Responder (FAR) training and the second adult had a Paediatric First Aid course completed.

(2)

(a) (b) Two suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in the service at all times. One was located in a locked cupboard in the care room and the second one was situated in the kitchen, which was inaccessible to the children.

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 written record was available of the fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 19 December 2023.

(b) A written record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 25 November 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the door in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) There was no recent written record available of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms. This was in conflict with the service's Fire Safety Policy which stated "...smoke detectors serviced yearly." The last certificate was dated October 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (b) The smoke alarms were serviced on 23 January 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (b) A copy of the smoke alarm service, completed by the engineer, which was dated 23 January 2023, was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1) (b) has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was presented to the inspector which indicated that the service was insured, the expiry date was recorded as 27 March 2024. The service is insured for 21 early years children in the morning session, the service has 16 children registered, and up to 24 school age children in both the breakfast club in the morning and school age care in the afternoon.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(a) of sound and stable structure,

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service appeared of sound and stable structure.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
- (1) The temperature in the children's sanitary area was recorded as 14.4°C, in conversation the staff member stated that this had previously been reported to the centre care taker. In order to facilitate the care needs of the children the temperature of the rooms should be between 18°C and 22°C.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

- (c)
- (1) Staff will ensure that the sanitary room temperature is maintained between 18°C - 22°C.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (c)
- (1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 (c) has been addressed.