

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC268
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Name of Service:	Milford Community Pre School
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Address of Service:	Scoil Mhuire, Milford, Charleville, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P56 FA00
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lianne Sexton
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork, P51DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien & F. Collins
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Milford Community Pre-school is a sessional and part time service located in Scoil Mhuire primary school on the outskirts of Milford village in North Cork. The service provides a sessional and part time service to children aged between 2 ½ and 5 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8am to 1pm.

A registered school aged childcare service is also provided from this premises

Staffing

There are six people employed in the service and one of these staff is a participant on the Community Employment Scheme. Four of the six staff hold qualifications 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 inspectors wish 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
- (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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) There was a person in charge and a deputy person in charge in the service and both were identified to the inspectors.

(b) The person in charge or the deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times and this was outlined on the staff roster and signing in and out record.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities within the service.

(2) There were six staff identified as being available to work in the service. The six staff files were assessed.

(a) There were eight references available from a past employer and these references were validated.

(b) There were four references available from a reputable source and these references were validated.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all six staff. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required for two staff members who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months and police vetting disclosures were available for both staff.

(4) Four of the six staff working directly with the children held the appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 7 on the National Qualifications Framework. The one remaining staff member worked with the children on a supernumerary capacity.

(7) All staff were provided with the appropriate information and training in relation to the service policies and procedures. The staff informed the inspectors that they received training on administration of emergency medication that would support them to provide the appropriate care and treatment to a child should it be needed.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) One staff member had a component certificate for a Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education and a statement of the full award was not available for review.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The registered provider confirmed the staff member held an appropriate qualification at Level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education. The registered provider will ensure that all staff have their full childcare award in the setting for review.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted photographic evidence of proof of the qualification being achieved from the awarding college.

Summary Comment

The actions documented by the registered provider meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 9(4) Management and Recruitment.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were adequate staff available at all times to the children during the operation of the service.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct as observed in the care room throughout the day.
- The first preschool child arrived at 8:45am, and had two staff who were qualified, caring for the children.
 - At 9.30am, 12 children were present and there were five staff, four of whom were qualified, caring for the children.
- (8)(a) On review of the staff roster and signing in and out sheets, there were at least two staff on the premises during the operation of the service.

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
- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

- Staff supported the children with handwashing after outdoor play, toileting and before snack time. Children were encouraged to be independent, and the staff were there to support the children when needed.
- Food and drinks were provided by the children's parents and guardians. Staff supported the children with opening their lunches and sat with the children during mealtime.
- Care plans were available for children who were receiving Access and Inclusion Model support, and staff were aware of each child's specific needs. Staff had participated in training in relation to caring for children with additional needs.
- The children were observed playing in small groups indoors and outdoors throughout the day. All children had an opportunity to partake in outdoor play on the day of inspection.

- When children were taken outside the small group remaining inside allowed for the care room to become a quieter area for the children to learn and develop. This allowed for children to regulate their emotions through more meaningful interactions with the staff and allowing the children to communicate how they are feeling.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff greeted the children and their parents and guardians in a respectful manner and the staff asked how each child was. It was observed that the staff spoke to each child's parents and guardians in a respectful manner.
- The children were supported by the staff in hanging up their belongings and placing their lunch in the fridge.
- On the day of inspection, the staff worked well as a team and supported each other with the plan for the day.
- On the day of inspection, staff and children were observed to having good relationships with each other. The staff spoke about the children's family members during snack time and a family wall was on display.
- Snack time had a relaxed atmosphere and allowed for the children and staff to chat. The children were given the time to enjoy their food and to build relationships with others

Physical and Material Environment

- The care room had a variety of toys and resources available to the children on child height shelving. Sensory materials were available to children who needed support in developing their sensory skills as per their care plan. This was based on the theme of Halloween and Autumn that the children were exploring. A sensory tray of leaves, pumpkins and acorns was freely available for the children to use.
- There were tabletop activities available to the children for developing their cognitive skills such as colouring, magnetic construction bricks and jigsaws.
- The home corner was available to the children which had a doll house, and a kitchen allowing the children to partake in role play.
- There were visual representations of the different cultures of the children displayed on the wall to promote an inclusive environment. There were toys that promoted inclusion available to the children.
- The outdoor area was a large space to the front of the service which allowed for physical development. Balance bikes, scooters and balls were available to the children. Movement games were painted on the ground and the children were observed using this for learning how to count and colour recognition. All children had an opportunity to play outdoors during the morning.

- Specific equipment and materials were available to children that needed them to learn and play such as a balance board and a peanut ball. This supported children’s physical development and skills.

Programme of Activities

- There was a visual schedule available for the children to use and the staff were aware of the benefits the visual schedule had for all children.
- Children were observed playing with leaves in the outdoor area and the staff sang a song about autumn leaves which linked in with the theme the children were exploring.
- During circle time, the children chatted about the theme they were exploring which was Halloween. Stories and songs based on the theme were used to support the children’s communication skills and supported speech development. Art and crafts that were made by the children were going home with the children that day.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were suitable areas in the room available for children to sit and rest during the day. The rest area consisted of beanbags which were available for children to sit and read story books. Children were not observed resting, and no child required to sleep on the day. The sleep area when required was set up and the end of the room to afford the children a quiet space to rest and sleep. Soft mats with a cleanable surface, blankets and pillows were available for the children to use if they were needed. Staff were aware of the importance of rest for young children.

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 door was adequately secured with an electromagnetic lock and a keypad. This prevented the risk of unauthorised entry to the service.
- The door into the care room was the main fire door for the service. There was also a tilt and turn window in place on one of the windows in the care room and acted as another fire exit. This window was not used for ventilating the room and therefore did not pose a risk to children falling or exiting and was adequately secured.
- Blind cords were safe and secured with appropriate tension clips.
- All toys and equipment observed were for the age of the children using them and in good condition.
- All flexes and cables, observed on inspection were in good condition and were out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with a gate that was kept closed while the children were using the outdoor area. The staff were observed standing near the gate and another staff member to the side of the building ensuring that children were safe at all times and were always observed by sight.
- The temperature of the three radiators were recorded in the care room ranging from 38.6°C to 40°C.
- The person in charge following completion of a risk assessment of a storage unit for hot school meals (primary school) which had been placed inside the main door of the service had developed and implemented a policy on maintaining the safety of the pre-school children who may have access to the unit while in use. The policy and its implementation were discussed and practices observed were in line with safe practice.
- Foods such as grapes were appropriately cut in the children's snack to prevent choking incidents for the children.

Infection Control:

- Hand hygiene was promoted after outdoor play, during toileting and before snack. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available to the children and staff. The water temperature recorded in the hand basin in the care room was 32.3°C. Children were observed washing their hands after outdoor play and before snack time.
- The care room and sanitary area were naturally ventilated through open windows.

- The care room appeared clean, and the tables were cleaned with appropriate disinfectant spray prior to snack time.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were not observed administering medication on the day of inspection.
- Staff were aware of the procedure for the administration of medication and were trained in the administration of medication for specific children. Procedures and risk assessments were available for review and were displayed for the staff in the event of an emergency.
- The medication was in date and clearly labelled. It was stored in a locked cabinet that was out of reach to children. The cabinet was clearly labelled for staff in the event of the medication needing to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were not observed sleeping on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis and records were assessed.
- Fire extinguishers were safely tethered to the walls.

Outing:

- The person in charge stated they do not carry out any outings with the children in the service.

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) Three of the staff held a current certification in first aid responder (FAR). The person in charge and the deputy person in charge were two of the staff trained in FAR certification and were on the premises during the operation of the service as recorded in the staff roster and signing in and out records. The service met the requirement to have at least one staff member suitably trained with a current FAR certification on the premises while the service is in operation.

(2) (a) & (b) The first aid box was identified by a symbol to be stored in the locked cabinet and the content of the box were in line with best practice for the numbers of children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured to operate as a part-time service and a school aged care service. The maximum number of children both pre-school and school aged care children that could attend at any time was 22.