

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC304
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	New Beginnings Pre-school
-------------------------	---------------------------

Address of Service:	St. Mary's Primary School, Dunmanway, Co. Cork
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	P47 CF70
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine O'Farrell
-------------------------------------	---------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	17/09/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and 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
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

New Beginnings Pre-school was established in 2015. The service caters for children aged two to six years, this includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, with registered hours from 9.00am to 12.00pm and from 1:00pm to 4:00pm each day Monday to Friday. The premises is situated within a national school in the rural village of Dunmanway Co Cork. The service operates from a large classroom within the school building. The children have access to an outdoor play area beside the service within the grounds of the national schools

Staffing

The registered provider is service based between this service and her other service located nearby There are an additional five childcare professionals enlisted in the service that work directly with the children. Each staff member holds a major 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to Regulation 23 under General Safety on day of inspection. A written response was received from the registered provider on day of inspection which mitigated the risk identified.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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) The service had a person in charge and deputy person in charge.
- (b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was not present at time of inspection.
- (2) Six staff files were reviewed.
- (a) There were ten written and validated references on file from past employers.
- (b) There were two written references available from sources other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the six 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 staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) The six adults who worked directly with the children all held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.

(2) During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations

There were 21 children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years with 2 adults in attendance

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) Details of daily attendance by each child was on file

(i) Staff daily attendance records were on file

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

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children appeared confident in their surroundings and demonstrated familiarity with several aspects of the daily routine, such as retrieving their lunch box prior to snack time, lining up in preparation to go outdoors and story time after lunch.
- The children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive way by the adults who supported the children while in the service.
- A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated indoors and outdoors during the inspection process.
- The key person system was evident in the service which enabled children to form secure relationships with the staff members caring for them.
- The adults were observed to be caring in interaction with the children and were observed to be interested in the children's activities and listened and spoke to them using soft tones of voice and positive language.
- The children's need to use the toilet was promptly and sensitively attended to by the adults who assisted the children as required.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

- The care room had been laid out in consideration of the age and developmental requirements of the children. For example, child sized tables and chairs were in good supply and items of interest were displayed on low set, open shelving at the children's eye level or at floor level.
- There were different interest areas for example: a home, a fine motor skill, a sand unit with accompanying play equipment, a farm unit, block and reading area. There was a child size couch and a soft colourful floor mat beside the book area. All items of interest were stored at child level such as, play dolls, handheld cars and trucks, different sized blocks, connectable shapes and a variety of art and craft materials.
- There was a wash hand basin in the room and with the assistance of step up children were observed enjoying water play.
- The walls were decorated with seasonal arts and crafts completed by the children.
- There was a spacious outdoor play area beside the service that was completely enclosed by the school building, walls and metal gates. Children were observed playing in the outdoor play area that had a mixture of all-weather and tarmac surface. There was a sheltered area with bench seating. The walking wall, cable beam and climbing frame with slide encouraged the children to master, gross motor skill play.

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

- In general, the food provided by the parents/guardians for the mid-morning snack were observed to be healthy and nutritious with age-appropriate size quantities of food for example freshly cut fruit such as strawberries, grapes, apple and sandwiches, and yogurts with water to drink.
- Staff ensured that the children had consistent access to their reusable water bottles.
- The children appeared to enjoy the food provided by their parents/guardians and were afforded ample time to eat and drink at a relaxed pace.

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:

- Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after using the toilet. There was liquid soap and disposable paper towel in all toilet facilities. There was thermostatically controlled hot water in one of the wash hand basins for the children and in the adult toilet facilities. The service provided two toilets and two wash hand basins for the children. The adults had access to a staff toilet and wash hand basin within the national school building.
- Personal waste including used tissues, and all cleaning waste was appropriately disposed of in foot operated pedal bins in the service.
- Perishable foods were refrigerated, in a refrigerator located in the playroom.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised after snack time and the floor was swept.

- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition cleaning records were on display.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the inspector's arrival at the service on the day of the inspection, the main entrance door to the service was not adequately secured. This posed a risk to the safety of children allowing unauthorised access to the early years service. An Immediate Action notice was issued to the registered provider under Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of children in relation to this non-compliance. A referral was forwarded to the Fire Department as the main entrance door to the service is an emergency fire exit door.
2. There was the potential risk of causing injury to a child in the service as the children had access to three cables for electrical equipment that were plugged in and attached to an extension lead located on the playroom floor under the office desk.

Infection Control:

The following three non-compliances had the potential of increasing the risk of cross infection:

3. There was no thermostatically controlled hot water in one of the wash hand basins located in the children's toilet facility.
4. The following items were stored on the floor in one of the children's toilets on day of inspection play equipment, an electrical Hoover and open plastic bags. Toilet areas should not be used as a storage facility for items, when not in use
5. There was rust visible on the radiator, at child height in the children's toilet facility.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider in her written response has stated the following:

General Safety:

1. In consultation with the Fire Officer as the main entrance door is also the emergency fire exit door for the service. The main entrance door is now locked when not in use reducing the risk of unauthorised access to the early years service.
2. A Carpenter came and resolved the issue by attaching a lead to the rear side of the table that is facing the wall. All the electrical cables are now removed from the playroom floor and the children have no access to any cables in the service.

Infection Control:

3. There is thermostatically controlled hot water in all of the wash hand basins located in the children's toilet facility. Each day the staff check that the two wash hand basins in the children's toilet facilities have thermostatically controlled hot water during the hours of operation.
4. All items stored on the floor of one of the children's toilet facilities have now been removed and the toilet facility is no longer used as a storage facility.
5. The rust was removed from the radiator located in the children's toilet facility and the radiator was painted with radiator paint.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. The Fire Officer cc the inspectorate in the correspondence sent from his department to the registered provider post referral. The statement from the registered provider was also accepted as evidence.
2. Photographic evidence of the floor covering under the administration desk in the playroom with all cables removed was submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Infection Control:

3. The statement from the registered provider was accepted as evidence.
4. Photographic evidence of the floor under the nappy changing unit in the children's toilet facility with all items that were stored there on day of inspection removed was submitted and deemed satisfactory.
5. Photographic evidence of the painted radiator in the children's toilet facility was submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Correspondence and photographic evidence received were examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23 as outlined above under General Safety and Infection Control of the Child Care 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) There were two adults working in the service that had a current certified First Aid Responder certificate (FAR).

One of the adults was present at time of inspection.

(2)

(a) There was a sufficiently stocked first aid box available in the service, which was safely stored out of reach of children.

(b) At all times when the service was in operation, first aid supplies were accessible to the 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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 9th September 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 on the 2nd October 2023.

(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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)
There was no record on file on day of inspection of when the fire alarm system was last tested and serviced in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider in her written response has stated the following:
In future the service will have a copy of the most recent testing and servicing of the fire alarm system within the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the last fire alarm testing and servicing record which took place within the last year was submitted and deemed satisfactory.

Summary Comment

Correspondence and photographic evidence received was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 26 (1)(b) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 insured, with insurance for 22 children in a sessional service valid until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.