

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC368
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Name of Service:	Midleton Preschool, Afterschool and Summer Camp
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Address of Service:	Midleton College, Connolly St., Midleton, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P25 F898
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Name of Registered Provider:	Daphne Spillane
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast
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

This privately owned, sessional category service is registered to cater for children aged two to six years. Daily opening hours are from 8.30am to 12.00pm. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday to Friday over 38 weeks of the year. A registered school age service is also accommodated.

Midleton Preschool, Afterschool and Summer Camp is located on the grounds of Midleton College and is provided from a single storey, purpose built premises. There is one operational care room, with adjoining sanitary facilities and an office. At the rear of the building, the children have access to a spacious outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are currently seven adults attached to the setting. The registered provider is not based at the service. Two of the adults are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. All six of the adults who work directly with the children have achieved a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education. In addition, a student was undertaking a work placement at the time of inspection.

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 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 registered provider had assigned a person in charge to manage the early years service. There was also a named deputy in place.
- (b) The person in charge was available at the setting for the duration of the unannounced inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the seven staff members and one student attached to the service, were assessed and the following was noted:
- (a) Of the 16 references that were required in total, 10 had been obtained from past employers. Corresponding reference validations were also provided.
- (b) A further six of the written and validated references available were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Records of police vetting were on file for three staff members who had lived outside the State as adults. Additional documentation in respect of one of the adults demonstrated that they had made efforts to obtain police vetting from two other jurisdictions, where they had resided for longer than six consecutive months. However, it had not been possible to obtain the police vetting, due to political instability within those countries.
- (4) Five of the adults who worked directly with the children either held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or an equivalent qualification, as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). A Letter of Eligibility to Practice was on file for the sixth adult. Qualifications were not required in respect of the registered provider or the student.

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) At the time of inspection, it was observed that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with children.
- (3) The adult to child ratio exceeded the requirements of the regulation. During the morning sessional service, 6 adults were available to 18 children, who were aged 2 years and 11 months to 4 years and 10 months. This included two AIM support staff. A student was not included in the adult child ratios.

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 mid-morning snack took place at 10.10am. As the children ate and drank, the atmosphere was observed to be calm and social, with plenty of time afforded for the children to enjoy their meal. The adults were observed to sit with the children and offered appropriate assistance.
- Easily accessible, adjoining sanitary facilities were available for the children, who were encouraged to wash their hands and use the toilet independently.

- The adults were responsive to the children’s care needs and promoted the development of self-care skills. For example, a child was reminded to wash their hands after cleaning their nose and children were encouraged to put on their own outdoor clothing and footwear.
- The children’s need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met through the availability of a two-tier cosy area, which included a variety of soft furnishings and books.
- The layout of the care room supported the children’s need for mobility during play and exploration. Time in the outdoor area was also facilitated, which allowed for participation in more active pursuits.
- Throughout the morning, a warm, engaging environment was evident in the care room, as the children appeared focused on their chosen activities and confidently followed routine tasks, such as tidying up and preparing for snack time.

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

- A Healthy Eating policy was in place at the service.
- Parents and caregivers supplied the children’s snacks for the sessional period. During the mid-morning snack, the children were observed to eat a wide variety of healthy foods, which included sandwiches, filled wraps, yogurts, cheese and a selection of fruit. Water was available to drink.
- The person in charge advised the inspector that none of the children who attended the service had any dietary requirements or food allergies.
- During conversation, the inspector was informed that if a child became hungry outside of the routine snack times, they could choose something to eat from their lunchbox.

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 found to have been appropriately secured, prior to the inspector's unannounced arrival. A doorbell entry system was in place for visitors. This minimised the risk of unauthorised persons gaining access to the service. The interior of this door had been fitted with a door sensor alarm, which, once engaged, emitted an audible sound when opened. This reduced the risk of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- In the outdoor play environment, an enclosure was provided through a combination of high-level fencing, walls and secured gates.
- The storage shed in the outdoor play area was maintained secure, which reduced the likelihood of children gaining access to any potentially harmful items.
- Cleaning agents were maintained out of the children's reach.
- Fire extinguishers were securely tethered.
- There were no blind cords in place.

Infection Control:

- Effective handwashing was facilitated through the provision of warm running water, liquid soap and single use paper towel dispensers, at the wash hand basins. The children were observed to wash their hands after a messy play activity and following outdoor play.
- A refrigerator was in use to store perishables snacks, prior to the mid-morning break.
- The care room was adequately ventilated; open windows allowed for the circulation of fresh air.
- It was noted that the tables were sanitised and the floor was hoovered, after the children had finished their snack break.
- In the entrance area, storage units were in place for the children's coats, bags and shoes.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication to a child was not observed. The inspector was advised that none of the children were in receipt of medication.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were clear and free from obstruction. Since the previous inspection, new locks had been installed on the fire exits doors, which ensured that they could be easily opened in the event of a fire.
- Fire exit signage was illuminated.

Outing:

- An outing from the premises did not take place.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The Garda vetting disclosure available for one of the adults was not dated within the previous three years, in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The written reply from the person in charge stated that Garda vetting for the relevant staff member has been renewed. As a preventive measure, a table of important documents that require periodic renewal, has been created, with each staff member listed. The manager and individual staff members are responsible for checking when updates are required.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated Garda vetting and a copy of the table of expiry dates for staff documents/training.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted were assessed and accepted in meeting the regulatory requirements.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*
- (a) *is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
 - (b) *is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1) Evidence on file demonstrated that three of the adults held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
- (2)
- (a) The service had an adequate supply of first aid materials, which were maintained in safe locations, out of reach of children.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were available to children at all times, throughout the hours of operation.

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 record of the monthly fire drills carried out at the service, was available on file. The most recently documented fire drill was dated 11 November 2024.
 - (b) Servicing records and information regarding the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm was accessible. It was noted that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 15 February 2024 and the wired smoke alarm was recently tested on 4 September 2024.
- (4) Notices, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire, were displayed alongside all three fire exit doors.

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 provide sessional care for up to 22 children at any one time, with cover valid until 27 March 2025.