

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC376		
Name of Service:	St. Mary's Pre School		
Address of Service:	St. Mary's National School, Enniskeane, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P47 NP80		
Name of Registered Provider:	Julie Murray		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	25/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM Not assessed
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child & Family Agency St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork		
Inspection undertaken by:	C Stokes		
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

St Mary's Preschool is located on the grounds of St Mary's National School, in Enniskeane, County Cork. This sessional service is registered to operate from 9 to 12 and from 12.15 to 3.15pm, currently it operates the morning session only in two rooms in a prefabricated building. The setting has a large, fully enclosed, and well-developed outdoor area and follows a play-based pedagogical approach with an emphasis on outdoor play and nature.

Staffing

The registered provider was service-based and was assisted by 6 staff. All staff working directly with the children in the service had 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 and safety. 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, deputy 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the named person in charge (PIC) of operating the service.

(b) In addition to the person in charge (PIC), there was a deputy person in charge. The PIC or deputy were on the premises at all times according to the registered provider.

(c) There was evidence of the management structure and a staff noticeboard in each room where parents drop off and collect their children from each room.

(2) (a) The staff recruitment files for all 7 adults were examined as part of this inspection. When the recruitment files were reviewed two written and appropriately validated references were available from 8 past employers.

(b) Two validated, written references were available from 6 source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 7 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) A certificate of qualification in Early Childhood care and education at a minimum of QQI level 5 on the National Qualification framework was on file for the 7 adults.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting from two jurisdictions was required for one adult who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period exceeding 6 months. These police vetting records were not in place on the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) The registered provider responded to state that out of jurisdiction vetting was applied for by the adult who required it. The registered provider clarified that in the recruitment phase, prospective staff will be required to apply for the necessary police vetting, if required prior to commencing working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

One police vetting disclosure dated 24 May 2024 was submitted as evidence. The second vetting was applied for and outstanding at the time of the CAPA 2 response of 10 June 2024.

Summary Comment

The response by the registered provider was assessed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of this regulation. The police vetting outstanding, will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (3) The ratio of adults to children was adequate with the 3 adults working with 14 children in room 1 and 3 adults working with 17 children in room 2. In addition, the registered provider was floating between both rooms.

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

- Adults were observed to encourage/assist the children to make the snack time a social occasion, while encouraging independence. Adults were observed to sit at the tables and interact with the children during snack time. Children were offered plates for lunch and assisted with setting up for snack time.
- The children were trained using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet and handwash afterwards.
- There was a cosy corner in each room with cushions and child sized sofa's to provide for the children's need for relaxation.
- Children's need for mobility was met with each room timetabled for an hour of outdoor play daily.

Physical and Material Environment

- The indoor environment was child friendly, bright, and spacious and laid out in special interest areas with materials accessible to the children in both playrooms.
- Interest areas included a creative area with arts and crafts, painting and messy area including painted popcorn in tuft trays, jelly in small trays; library with soft area; sensory area; home corner; construction area, tabletop toys including, puzzles, threading, pegboards; imaginative area with dress up, transport, farm sets, dinosaurs, and construction. The registered provider advised that the interest areas change regularly, according to the interests of the children. It was noted that children's emerging interests were written up in each room and on display.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available. Children's artwork was displayed in both playrooms at children's eye levels and was linked to the recent curricular themes.
- The outdoor area had interest areas and equipment including bikes, ride on toys, sand, tray for water play, a playhouse, slides, climbing frame, swings, diggers, blocks, balance beans and tyres. A boat for imaginative play, digging area, wheelbarrows, chalkboard, logs for construction, and mud kitchen were also in place to create a challenging, stimulating, and enriching environment for the children to enjoy their hour of outdoor play daily.
- There was a canopy area which was fully sheltered which accommodated outdoor play in all-weather daily and was used to store the children's outdoor suits and wellies. This area was large, well developed, and contained tables and benches for outdoor dining.

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:

- External doors and internal doors were secured.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible in locked under-sink presses.
- No blind cords, cables or trailing flexes/leads were observed.
- The outdoor area was fully fenced, for the sole use of the preschool children and no hazards were observed.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing was observed prior to snack. Adults assisted children with handwashing; ensuring the water was at the appropriate temperature, and soap and paper towels were used as required.
- A lidded, foot operated pedal bin was available in the toilets and playrooms for the disposal of paper towels.
- A fridge was in place for the storage of lunches and water bottles in both playrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider advised that no child required medication on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- No child slept in this sessional service on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

- No outings were observed on the day of inspection. The service had an outings policy.

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 ensured that a person trained in first aid was always available. Four adults were trained in FAR.
- (2) (a)(b) The registered provider ensured that a fully equipped first aid box, was readily available/accessible in both preschool rooms.

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) The registered provider ensured that a record of the fire drills was maintained. The most recent fire drill was dated 11 April 2024.
- (b) The registered provider ensured a maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were maintained. These records were dated January & February 2024 respectively.
- (4) A notice of the fire evacuation procedure was on display on the wall in both playrooms.