

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC416
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Name of Service:	The Old School House
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Address of Service:	Gogginstown, Knockraha Village, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T56 W085
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Name of Registered Provider:	Deirdre O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	72	PM	54
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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:	C Stokes & D Prendergast
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

The Old School House is a private full day care service operating since 2000. It is registered to operate from 8am to 6pm daily. It currently operates from 8am to 5.30pm. The service offers the ECCE, full day care and school aged care. It is registered to cater for children aged 0-6 years, but currently offers care to children aged 1-6 years. The service operates with an emphasis on play-based learning, with a focus on outdoor play provision. The service operates from a converted school building in a rural area, adjacent to a Primary school. The service had 3 playrooms and two sleep rooms, downstairs and three further playrooms upstairs. It also had outdoor areas to the front, rear, and side of the building.

Staffing

The service employs 16 adults, including the registered provider, who is not based at the setting. One adult was undertaking a work placement with the early years children and was employed to work with school age children in the afternoons. The remaining 14 staff members and the registered provider, have each attained a relevant award in Early Childhood Care and Education. There was one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11, 19, 20, 22, 23 and 29 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 25. 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 inspectors wish 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 appointed a person in charge of managing the childcare facility and a deputy was also assigned to the service.
- (b) The person in charge was on duty at the premises when the inspection commenced and remained available throughout the inspection process.
- (2) Recruitment records were reviewed in relation to the 16 adults employed at the service.
- (a) There were 19 written references in place from past employers, with records of validation available for 17 of these references.
- (b) Nine written and validated references had been provided from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 16 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as 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) Not applicable. Police vetting was not required, as none of the adults had resided outside the State for periods that exceeded six consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Records demonstrated that 15 of the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, ranging from level 5 to 8, on the National Framework of Qualifications. A qualification was not required for the adult who was undertaking a work placement with the early years children and working with school age children.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Records of reference validations were unavailable for two references in respect of one adult.

Four reference validations were held in respect of two other adults, however, no corresponding written references had been obtained, as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

According to the registered provider CAPA response, references and validations are now in place. All new staff members will be asked for written references before they start and will be verified signed and dated.

Supporting documentation submitted

2 written references and validations were received for the necessary staff member.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and met the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(2) In the morning and afternoon periods there were sufficient adults working directly with the children, outside of the period from 1 to 2pm.

Room/ age range	adults	children	ratio
Wobbler (1-2 years)	4	17	1:5
Toddler (2-3 years)	3	18	1:6
Junior Preschool (3-4 years)	2	17 morning 10 afternoon	1:11 morning 1:8 afternoon
Senior preschool (4-5 years)	2 morning *afternoon	20 morning 9 afternoon	1:11 morning 1:8 afternoon
Total		72	54

*Note Junior and Senior Preschool rooms join from 2.30pm with 3 staff.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children were not met where there were an insufficient number of adults working directly with children in the wobbler and toddler rooms from 1 to 2pm during staff breaks. During this period there were 35 wobblers and toddlers cared for by 4 staff, whereas 7 staff were required. The ratios of 1:5 and 1:6 were not maintained while 3 adults from the wobbler room and 1 adult from the toddler room went on their lunch break and were replaced by 1 adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider advised in their CAPA response that staff breaks have been altered and only two staff members from downstairs will be on break at any one time. Breaks will start at 12:45pm so that 6 members of staff can get breaks before quarter past two. A seventh member of staff is available from 1pm to assist as required, according to the registered providers response of 10 May 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

A staff roster was submitted as evidence with the registered providers response of 10 May 2024.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance of regulation 11 has been addressed.

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 interact and encourage/assist the children to make the meal times a social occasion, while encouraging independence. Dinner time was observed in the wobbler dining room, and in the toddler dining area.
- The children were largely trained using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet in the upstairs preschool rooms. In the toddler and wobbler rooms children were observed to be changed regularly.
- There was a cosy corner in the home area to provide for the children's need for rest and relaxation in each room. In addition, there were 2 designated sleep rooms for the wobblers. Children from the toddler room who needed to sleep were observed to sleep on stackable beds in the empty wobbler room in an established sleep routine after dinner.
- The children in the wobbler and toddler rooms had their need for mobility met in this setting as a period of outdoor play was observed to be facilitated in the morning and after sleep where the children dressed in their outdoor clothing.

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) The sleep facilities for the younger wobblers adjacent to the original baby room were observed to be adequate and suitable.

Non-Compliance Information

(1b) The sleep facilities in the main wobbler sleep room were unsuitable as follows.

- (1) Two of the cot mattresses in the main wobbler sleep room were not adequate, one was too short for the cot, and the other mattress did not have a protective cover and was disintegrating.
- (2) One of the fitted sheets had a large hole in it and was unsuitable for use.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider advised in their CAPA reply that the cots have been measured and two new mattresses were purchased.
2. New sheets have been purchased and the sheet with whole has been thrown out.

Supporting documentation submitted

1, 2. Receipts for two mattresses, a waterproof mattress protector and a 2-pack of sheets were submitted as photographic evidence accompanying the CAPA 1 & 2 responses.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and met the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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

- The snacks/meal provided by parents/guardians were reheated and served in either the care rooms or the dining room.
- The meals/snacks were appropriately spaced during the day.
- The majority of the meals were observed to be suitable, varied and balanced.
- Water bottles were available to the children in their care rooms and also in the dining areas for wobblers and toddlers.
- Meals/snacks were stored appropriately in fridges throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- One child in the toddler room was observed to have a bowl of reheated spaghetti hoops as their main meal of the day. As this child was attending on a full day care basis, this was not a suitable main meal as it was not sufficiently balanced, varied, and nutritious to meet the needs of the child. Staff acknowledged that they have address this ongoing issue with the parent/guardian with both meals/snacks not being suitable and balanced. The designated person in charge stated that they were aware of this and that the service was trying to address it with the parent, however, there was no contingency plan in place in the service to offer an alternative or supplement the meals/snacks as necessary.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has addressed the issue of balanced meals with the parent and the issue has been resolved according to the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider stated that all parents were sent the healthy food policy again throughout the year as a reminder. This statement was accepted in lieu of documentary evidence.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and met the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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:

- Blind cords were observed to be secured or inaccessible on the day of inspection.
- External doors and internal doors were secured.
- Storage of stackable beds was in the lobby of the wobbler room and inaccessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible, and the kitchen was inaccessible.

Infection Control:

- A supply of thermostatically controlled hot water was available for hand washing at the sinks. Soap, paper towels/electric dryers were in place. Lidded, foot operated pedal bins were available in the toilets for the disposal of nappies/paper towels.
- Hand washing was observed prior to mealtimes and after outdoor play as well as after children's use of the toilet or nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were competent in describing the medicine administration procedure and no medications were observed to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

- Adults performed physical checks on sleeping children every 10 minutes and were observed to record these on the online application.
- Temperatures in the designated sleep rooms were within the required range of 16 to 20 °C, measuring 18.7 and 19.2°C respectively.

Fire Safety:

- No issues with fire safety were observed. Emergency exit routes were clear.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. On the day of the inspection, 6 children from the toddler room were observed to be in the wobbler room on stackable beds without direct supervision in the room by an adult. It is acknowledged that an adult checked these sleeping children every 10 minutes, however, adult supervision was not constant as required.

General Safety:

2. Garda vetting was available for one staff member; however, this vetting disclosure 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

Safe Sleep:

1. The registered provider responded to state that a staff member will now stay in the sleep room with the toddlers on the cot beds.

General Safety

- 2 The registered provider committed to checking the Garda vetting disclosures annually to ensure that all are dated within the past three years as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A staff roster was submitted as evidence of cover while children are sleeping, and adults are taking breaks.
2. An updated Garda vetting disclosure was submitted with the CAPA response on 1 May 2024.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and met the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) An adult with current First Aid Response (FAR) certification was not consistently available to the children, as none of the adults had undertaken said training. It was noted that 16 staff members had recently completed paediatric first aid, however, an adult with up to date FAR training is required to be available to the children at all times.

(2) (a/b) While first aid boxes were readily available, the overall supplies were not adequate to meet the number of children in attendance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Two staff were booked into FAR training according to the registered providers response of 10 May 2024.

(2) First Aid supplies were updated according to the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) Two staff were booked into FAR training and evidence of same submitted.

(2) Photographic evidence of first aid newly purchased supplies were submitted.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and met the regulatory requirements of this regulation.

The availability of FAR trained staff will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required

Compliance Information

(c) On the day of inspection, the premises was kept adequately heated, lit and ventilated. Care rooms were heated within the range of 18 to 22°C and sleep rooms between 16 to 20 °C.

(d) The premises was observed to be adequately cleaned, maintained and in a suitable state of repair.