

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC444
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Name of Service:	Toonsbridge Playschool
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Address of Service:	Clonclud, Kilnamartyra, Macroom, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P12 FW60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Geraldine Lynch
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co 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
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Description of service

Toonsbridge Playschool is an established privately owned early years service that is in operation since 1996. The service is a registered sessional service to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years. On day of inspection the children were aged between 3 and 6 years and were availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 09:30 to 12:30 hours each day Monday to Friday. Toonsbridge Playschool consists of two playrooms that are positioned on the ground floor of a converted detached domestic house that is located in a rural setting in Kilnamartyra, Macroom Co Cork. Only one of the two playrooms was in operation on day of inspection. There is kitchen for adult use only and a locked storage room. There was an adequate number of toilets for the adults and children in attendance. There was a spacious compact, secured outdoor play area available to the children located beside the building.

Staffing

There were three staff in attendance. There was one of the three staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. The registered provider is not service based. The three staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification 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 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
- (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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service.

Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 3 staff members and the registered provider. The following records were available for the four adults:

- (2)
- (a) Of the required 8 references, 6 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.
- (b) The remaining 2 references were from another source other than a previous employer.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Two police vetting records were on file for the one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- There was evidence that the 4 adults had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for 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.*
- (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

- (1)
- The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.
- (2)
- During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- There were 14 children in attendance aged from 3 to 6 years with 3 adults directly supervising them.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the children's registration forms. were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.
- (k) The service had an Accident and Incident book. Each accident and incident record had a duplicate copy that the parent received at collection time following the accident /incident pertaining to their child. A sample of accident and incident records were reviewed and were correctly completed and signed by staff and the relevant parent or guardian. The parental signature indicated that the information had been duly relayed.

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

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The mid-morning snack was a sociable and unhurried event.
- Lots of positive interacting observed between the children and staff, building the children's confidence and communication skills within the setting and promoting socialisation.

- Staff were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Self-toileting by the children was encouraged. The staff members were observed to assist where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting and outdoor play.
- Children were encouraged and supported to develop independence regarding personal care and life skills. Each child had an all-weather suit, coat and hat. Children were largely independent putting on their hats and coats prior to playing outdoors.
- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was maintained with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members worked well together, and the children were familiar with the routine, Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.
- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults for example the opening of lunch boxes, cartons and peeling of fruits.
- Parents and guardians were welcomed at drop off times and collection times. Regular updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians via the services electronic system and drop off and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment

- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as art and crafts, imaginary play and tabletop activities.
- The indoor environment of the playroom was laid out in defined interest areas, including home/construction area, arts and crafts area and tabletop activities area.
- Tabletop activities included fine motor skill materials such as jig saws and puzzles and children had access to small and large construction items.
- Child size couches were available beside the book area where books were displayed at child height.
- Only one of the two playrooms was in operation on day of inspection. The layout of the room promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.

- The service was clean, bright and the openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- There was a designated spacious outdoor play area provided beside the premise. The outdoor area consisted of three areas: the yard, messy play and the orchard. The orchard included trees with wooden tippees and a climbing frame that fostered pretend play and restful play if a child so wished in a forest like setting. A number of resources providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills such as cycling, kicking, throwing and sliding were available in the outdoor play area. Equipment included push and ride on toys, a climbing frame with a slide, walking wall and a stand-alone stationary see saw. Sensory play included a polytunnel with planting areas, water and a sand unit with ample sand and utensils for the children to enjoy digging and spilling.

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 children’s parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.
- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- Perishable foods were refrigerated.

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:

- On the inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- The children had no access to the service kitchen.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playroom in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a high metal fence and gates.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom and in the children's and adult toilet facilities. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets were 29°C on day of inspection.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack, after toileting, messy play and outdoor play.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.

Administration of Medication:

- The person in charge stated that there was one child currently attending the service that required emergency medication to be administered. There was a recorded care plan in place. The medication when checked had not exceeded its expiry date. The person in charge stated they had received training in the administration of the emergency medication. The child had not required the emergency medication to be administered to date while attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

- This service was categorized as a sessional service and a sleep facility was not required. There was soft seating provided beside the book area that encouraged children to sit and relax when reading or to opt out of activities if they so wished while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions.

Outing:

- No outings took place at time of inspection.

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 did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that two staff members held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to 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 morning of the 05/02/25
 - (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 04/11/24. The emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 27/02/25
- (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.

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 adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 33 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover