

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE127
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Name of Service:	St. Senan's National School
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Address of Service:	Montessori Class, St. Senan's National School, Kilrush, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V15 HX06
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Honan-Walsh
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

St. Senan's National School sessional service was established in 1999, in St. Senan's National School, in Kilrush, County Clare. The service is provided in one room, Monday to Friday from 09:15 to 12:15 for children ranging in age from two to six years. The programme of care and education is facilitated in a room at the rear of the national school. An enclosed outdoor area is provided adjacent to the care room.

Staffing

On the 13 September 2024, the registered provider operated the sessional service assisted by two adults. An adult is available to provide relief cover when required. The adults employed had evidence on file of engagement in continuing professional development.

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. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. 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. 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, the 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 was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available in respect of the registered provider, two adults working in the service and the relief cover person. The findings included the following:

(a)

Four written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)
Four validated references were available in respect of adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)
International police vetting was not required for the adults working in the service, as the adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
Four adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to 7 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.

(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)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 13 September 2024 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the pre-school room. Three adults cared for the twenty children attending the service.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and level of development of the children.

Basic Needs of the Infants & Children:

The adults treated the children with positive regard throughout the programme of care and education. This was demonstrated by the positive behavioural strategies used by the adults during interactions. The adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's capabilities, preferences and interests. The children chose their individual activities and responded in a prompt manner to children's need to be comforted. Prior to change in transitions the children were notified in advance.

On the inspector's arrival the children were engaged in open ended play-based activities, the children transitioned to circle time where they engaged in song and relaxation techniques. The children were encouraged to be independent whilst caring for their belongings, during the activities and whilst using the toilet. The children and adults sat and ate together during mealtime and conversed amicably. Mealtime was observed to be unhurried and a sociable occasion. After mealtime the children played in the outdoor area which offered an enriching and challenging experience.

Physical & Material Environment:

The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment. The indoor environment was spacious, bright and laid out with defined areas of interest. The preschool room walls displayed numerical and alphabetical learning aids, the seasons, a family section and the children's artwork. Low level seating and tables were provided for the children. The play materials and equipment were freely available and accessible to the children in labelled

containers on low level shelving. The room was laid out with an art area, dolls play area, a home corner, a clothing shop, a dress up area and a nature table. A bookshelf with a large range of diverse reading materials was located adjacent to a three-seater couch. Shelving units were accessed by the children these included manipulative and constructive materials and equipment. Learning journals were available on accessible shelving demonstrating creative work completed by the children.

The outdoor play area was provided to the rear of the service. Areas of interest for the children included a wooden play frame with a slide, plantar boxes for the children's flowers to bloom, a sand pit, a wooden mud kitchen with a large range of natural life accessories, a digging area, seating and various transport vehicles. The children engaged in sensory and pretend play in the mud kitchen, digging area and playhouse. The adults supported the children planting hyacinths in pots. The children enjoyed gross motor exercises on the activity unit.

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 school was secured with a key coded, bell operated system to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate to protect the children within.
- The children in attendance were recorded on arrival and on departure from the service.
- Cleaning agents and storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- All the toys and play equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas were maintained in good condition.
- Domestic waste was stored in a secured area which was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean and a hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and a pedal operated bin. Child friendly visual aids were available in the toilet cubicles and at the wash hand basins to demonstrate to children how to use the toilet and to prompt the children to wash their hands. Completed cleaning schedules were available.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals during the session.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider stated that medication is not routinely administered by the service.

Fire Safety:

- The adults working in the service had records of completed fire safety training.
- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly points were readily identifiable.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are undertaken by the service.
- A copy of a risk assessment and an outings checklist were available for the last completed outing.
- An outings policy was available to inform practice.

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)

An adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily identifiable area in the care room.

(b)

A first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. A fire drill took place during the inspection.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were available. The most recent firefighting equipment and smoke alarm maintenance service took place on the 22 July 2024.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.