

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CN007
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ballyhaise Community Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Community Centre, Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H12 E5F7
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Geraldine Dowd
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/10/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	34	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cothill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Mc Kenna
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Ballyhaise Community Pre-School is located within the local community centre in Ballyhaise. Two designated care rooms, adjoining sanitary areas, and an enclosed outdoor play area are available for use by the service. A sessional service is provided to children aged between 2 to 6 years of age, Monday to Friday between 9am to 12pm. The service caters for a maximum of 44 preschool children. There is parking to the front and side of the building.

### Staffing

There are eight staff employed in the preschool service. The registered provider is a board member and does not work directly in the service.

### 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 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 service had a designated person in charge, and a named person in charge who can deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that at all times when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The staff files for 8 adults were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references from past employers were on file for the 8 adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 8 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 8 adults, demonstrated that one adult had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the one adult was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 8 adults employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

## 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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Three adults cared for 15 children aged 3 years 10 months to 4 years 7 months in Room 1.

Three adults cared for 19 children aged 3 years 8 months to 3 years 11 months in Room 2.

## 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
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily routine of the service:

##### Basic Needs

- Children's snacks were observed to be varied and suitable for their age and stage of development. The snacks taken in from home consisted of sandwiches, a selection of fruit, rice cakes, crackers and a variety of yogurts. The service provided drinks for children with a choice of water or milk available. Snack times were observed to be relaxed and unrushed with children facilitated to take their time. A recently introduced rolling snack in the morning upon the children's arrival, which consisted of cheese, ham, wraps, and orange slices was observed to be eaten by the children. Staff advised the inspector this was working well.
- Children were adequately supervised at toilet times, with extra supports provided if needed. Children had designated places for their coats and spare clothes. Areas for children's creative work and play observations were stored in folders, with children observed on the day to take pride in their work while showing the inspector where their folders were.
- Areas of rest were provided in both care rooms in a variety of forms such as soft seating, armchairs and mats. The atmosphere in the care rooms was warm and welcoming, the children were observed to be consistently engaged in play and activities. Both care rooms had a change of environment to the outdoor area on the day of inspection. Staff advised that each care room take turns outside at various times each day. The children were observed to be dressed appropriately for the outdoors.

### Supporting Relationships

- Interactions observed between children were positive, turn taking and helping one another was observed, with children and adults discussing their “golden rules” and how to care for one another. The adults engaged with children in a supportive and encouraging way. The children’s independence was enhanced through well-resourced play areas available to the children, with the daily routine allowing for children to make choices and lead their own play opportunities.
- Any minor disagreements between children and their peers were calmly addressed by staff with resolutions achieved quickly and age appropriately for the children. Where children appeared upset, the adults were observed to comfort children and use calming strategies to help when required. The adults were observed to use calm and positive tones in interacting with children and other adults.
- The staff team were observed to work well with each other, clearly communicating and supporting one another within the daily routine. The adults displayed familiarity with children’s personalities and routine preferences and supported these through conversations and discussions about the children’s home lives.
- The children appeared confident in their daily routine and were observed to be familiar with what comes next. Transition from snack times, indoor and outdoor play times were smooth. Newly introduced Irish words for food items at snack times was a conversation observed at snack time in Room 1. Story time on a large mat with opportunities for child to adult engagement was observed in Room 2.
- Communication with parents is mainly in person or via a digital messaging service. Records of updates provided to parents were available for review. The manager advised meetings with parents occur once a year, used to discuss the children progress and provides a space for the service to address any queries or concerns the parents may have. Start of term and end of term questionnaires were completed by parents which the manager explained was helpful for staff in getting to know the children and their parents, and to help the staff work towards meeting both the child and the parent expectations.

### Physical and Material Environment

- The indoor care rooms were observed to be well resourced with plenty of materials and interest areas available for the number of children in attendance. The care rooms were spacious with story and relaxing areas, construction sections, creative areas, small world, role play and dress up, table top and floor play designated play areas. Children were observed to engage and enjoy role play opportunities to include playing hairdressers, the chemist, “building a hotel” and working in “mc donalds”.

- The care rooms were bright and welcoming with the children’s art work on display throughout. A recent take your teddy to preschool event had occurred where children had coloured a photo frame, with their photo of them and their teddy inserted. The children spoke to the inspector about their teddies names and demonstrated a sense of pride in pointing out their own photos. Displays of family photos and birthday charts were displayed within viewing level of the children.
- The secured outdoor area had a mixture of concrete and artificial grass surfacing. A part of the outdoor area was sheltered to allow for play in inclement weather conditions. Climbing structures, water features, sand tray, gravel pit with digging equipment, ride on trucks, chalk and colouring area, planting areas, play houses, tool work shop, rest areas and small world play toys were among some of the large variety of play materials and areas available to the children.

### 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 to the service was locked upon the inspectors arrival and remained locked throughout the inspection.
- The designated outdoor area was secured by high level fencing and a key locking mechanism.
- The children were observed to be closely supervised by the adults during the inspection.
- Play materials and resources used by the children both indoor and outdoor were maintained in good repair.
- A manager daily risk assessment was in place and up to date.
- Window blind cords were observed secured on the day of the inspection.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children.

### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, hand soap, pedal operated bins and paper towels were provided for handwashing purposes.
- Facial tissues and pedal bins were provided in both care rooms.
- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time in the care rooms, and after toilet times.
- The children snacks taken in from home were stored in the fridge until snack times.
- The care rooms were maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.
- The care rooms and sanitary areas were well ventilated through means of openable windows and mechanical ventilation.

### 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) Following review of staff files and staff hours, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times.

(2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises and stored in an accessible and conspicuous location out of the reach of children.

## 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

- (a) A record of fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 01/10/2024.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms was dated 19 June 2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in written and child friendly photographic format throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 44 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.