

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR061
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Name of Service:	St. Brigid's Playschool
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Address of Service:	The Old School Building, St Brigid's Church Road, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 P0K1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jacqueline Clinton
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	23/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

St Brigid's Preschool is a privately owned early years service situated in a residential area in Stillorgan Co Dublin. The service consists of two preschool rooms; sanitary facilities and an outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises. Care and education are provided to children aged 2 to 6 years between the hours of 9.00am to 2.00pm, Monday to Friday. The service also operates a school-age service in the afternoon.

Staffing

There are currently four adults employed to work in the preschool service including the registered provider. On the day of inspection, all four adults were present.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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, 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,*
- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 to deputise as required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service.
Discussions with the designated person and the person appointed to deputise confirmed that there was a person in charge on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available during inspection, and discussions with the person in charge, it was determined that one new staff member had been employed since the previous inspection. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3) and (4) was reviewed in respect of the staff member as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda vetting were reviewed for a total of six staff members including four preschool staff and two school age staff members.
- (a) Two written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for six staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for the staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed showed that the procedures specified above under Regulation 9(2) had been carried out before the staff member commenced employment in the service.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the staff member who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) The minimum adult-to-child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection. There were 4 adults working directly with 16 children in the morning, and 4 adults working directly with 14 children in the afternoon.

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-

(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 registered provider ensured appropriate and suitable care practices were in place in the service as follows: Play was child led, and children demonstrated enjoyment in their learning, moving freely around the care room and accessing materials of interest with ease. It was evident that children's voices were heard and respected, and staff were continuously available, actively listening, asking open ended questions and extending children's learning in the moment. Adult child interactions were responsive, respectful, and reciprocal and staff regularly provided affirmative feedback and encouragement. They used soft tones, called the children by their names, and maintained eye contact.

Mealtimes were observed to be a relaxed social occasion and staff were observed to use the time as an opportunity to promote healthy eating. The service provided a morning snack of fruit and crackers, and children brought their main meal from home. The service had a healthy eating policy, and the person in charge reported

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

that parents were given guidance on healthy lunches before they joined the service. Children's drinks were stored at an accessible level in both care rooms.

Children were supported to be independent and were observed to be confident and competent in managing their self-care and self-help needs. For example, children were observed using the toilet independently, washing their hands routinely, retrieving and managing their lunch boxes and tidying up after, tidying up after play and putting on their own coats. Staff were available to assist children in a timely manner and demonstrated awareness of children's needs. For example, they responded promptly when children became upset, provided comfort and attended to children's personal appearance, such as cleaning their faces.

Rest areas were available with child sized sofas, bean bags and rugs and children were observed to use these spaces to take a break from activities. Children were familiar with the routine, and transitions from one activity to the next were well managed with staff providing advance warning that a change was approaching. Staff reported that outdoor play is actively promoted in the service, and all of the children had the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection. The inspector also observed that children were appropriately dressed for the weather. Staff explained that parents are invited into the service prior to their child's start date and that ongoing communication happens at drop off and collection and via email.

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 entrance doors and internal doors in the service were adequately secured to prevent unauthorised persons from entering and to ensure children could not exit unsupervised.
- The staircase was adequately lit and had suitable handrails to support the children moving safely both up and down between the first floor and the ground floor.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and were inaccessible to children.
- Daily inspections of the outdoor environment took place in the service, as evidenced by documented risk assessments.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Children were observed engaging in appropriate and consistent handwashing routines, including after using the toilet, following outdoor play, before meals and after messy play activities.
- The care rooms were visibly clean and well maintained and documented cleaning schedules were available for review.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures required to ensure medication is given safely if needed, including obtaining written parental/guardian consent and ensuring a second staff member was present to witness the administration.
- Administration of medication forms were available for use if required.

Fire Safety:

- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.
- Fire exits were observed to be unobstructed, clearly identified, and easily opened from the inside during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. There were no pedal-operated bins available in one of the children's bathrooms or in either of the care rooms. Two of the bins were open-top with no lid, and the third had a lid that required hand contact to dispose of waste. This presented a risk of infection spreading due to the need for direct hand contact when managing waste.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider has purchased three new pedal operated bins and stated that they will only use pedal operated bins in the service going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographs of the three pedal operated bins.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) There was evidence to show that two adults hold certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training, and both adults were available to the children for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position on a shelf on the ground floor.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.