

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DS195 |
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| Name of Service: | Scoil Íosa Playgroup |
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| Address of Service: | Scoil Íosa National School, Tymon North Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin |
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| Eircode: | D24 X37V |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Bernadette Frazer, Elizabeth Bermingham |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 19/02/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 8 | PM | n/a |
|-----------------------------------|----|---|----|-----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | R. Brien |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Scoil Íosa Playgroup is a sessional service which provides care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday. On the day of inspection, the service was operating from 09:15 to 12:15.

The service operates from a former classroom in Scoil Íosa national school in an urban residential area of Tallaght, south Dublin. Children have access to the school library and to the school hall. Children also have access to the school yard for outdoor play.

Staffing

The service currently employs 3 staff and there were 3 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered providers work directly in the service and were present on the day of inspection.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- 9(1)(a)(b),(2),(4) Management and Recruitment,
- 11(1),(3),(8)(c) Staffing Levels,
- 19(1)(a)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
- 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,
- 25(1)(2) First Aid,
- 26(1)(4) Fire Safety Measures.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under regulation 29(d) Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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,
- (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

(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 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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2) The files of three adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included one staff member who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 24 May 2021. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Eight validated, written references were available from a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Records were available evidencing that the three staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) There was no evidence available to demonstrate that two references in respect of one adult had been validated by the registered providers before the staff member commenced working in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

References were validated in August 2021. A written validation was completed. Any future references will be documented when validated.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were eight children attending the service being supervised by three adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(c) Not applicable, the service is not operated single-handedly.

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

(1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring in their lunch from home. Lunch took place at 10:40. Children were offered a choice of water or milk with their meal. Staff ate with children during lunchtime. Children were observed engaging in conversation with staff and their peers during their meal and staff supported children who needed assistance with their lunch.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. The inspector observed children using the toilet as they needed, getting their own lunches, cleaning up after their lunch and play and putting on their own coats. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

The service had a key person system in place and staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy. Staff were observed acknowledging children's achievements and efforts positively.

Children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed. Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play.

Staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection time and through the use of an online application.

The care room was bright and was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included small world toys, a home corner, sensory play, an art area and a rest area with books. The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and was adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Children's artwork and photos were displayed throughout the care room.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care room.

The children have access to the school yard for outdoor play which has a mix of tarmac and grass surfacing. All children accessed the school yard during the inspection. Children were observed engaging in energetic and imaginative play in the outdoor area.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered providers had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- Medicines and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before meals.
- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The equipment and play materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Children's lunches were stored in the fridge.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

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) A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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 written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 18 January 2024.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment was available. The maintenance records for the fire fighting equipment were dated 19 June 2023.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) There were no records available on the day of inspection to evidence that the maintenance for the smoke alarm system was up to date. Records evidenced that maintenance of the smoke alarms had last taken place on 23 November 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The school secretary contacted maintenance company. They informed her that the next inspection was due in April. They apologised for missing the last inspection. Every March I will remind the school secretary that the inspection is due in April. An alarm has been set on the playgroup's phone and the registered provider's private phone.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted evidence that maintenance will be carried out in April 2024, this will be assessed on next inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) A wooden box encasing pipework in the sanitary accommodation was water damaged. There was a large hole in the wood and the wood was observed to be peeling away and split.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

I asked the school caretaker if he could repair the box. He repaired it on 26th February.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.