

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS205		
Name of Service:	Meadows Preschool		
Address of Service:	17 Monksfield Meadows, Clondalkin, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin.		
Eircode:	D22 XW72		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Gilbert		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, 7th Floor, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Dublin 8.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern		
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		

Description of service

Meadows Preschool is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged 2-6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm. The service operates from two adjoining rooms on the ground floor of a house in a residential area of Clondalkin, Dublin 22. Sanitary facilities are available on the ground floor and an outdoor area is provided to the rear.

Staffing

There are two adults employed to work directly with the children including the registered provider. A third adult was present on the day of inspection on a work experience placement.

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 areas of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1), (2) & (4), 11 (1) & (3), 16 (h), (j) & (k), 19(1)(a), 23, 25 and 26.

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.

Additional Information

Referrals to other agencies:

A referral was made to Better Start National Early Years Quality Development Initiative for quality development under regulation 19(1)(a) following the previous inspection dated 7 October 2021. It is acknowledged that the registered provider took some measures towards quality development, however it was observed on this inspection that further development is required. A re-referral was made to Better Start on 2 May 2023 in consultation with the registered provider.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 named person in charge and a person who could deputise in their absence.
 - (b) The person in charge was present when the inspector arrived and remained on the premises throughout the inspection.

The inspection focused on the recruitment records of adults who had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection. The registered provider reported that one adult had commenced a work experience placement from October 2022.

(2)

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for the adult.

(d) Not applicable as the adult had not lived outside the state for more than six months as an adult.

(4) Not applicable as the adult was present on a work experience placement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) There were no references available for the adult from either a previous employer or a reputable source. The registered provider told the inspector these had not been sourced.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) & (b) Immediately following inspection the adult began to look for the two required references. The registered provider has received one of those references from a reputable source. The registered provider received an email with a reference from a previous employer however, the referee has since retired and the provider is awaiting the phone number to verify. Before the adult returns in September, if the registered provider cannot complete this verification, an alternative reference will be sourced. The registered provider will prevent this from happening in future by putting together a checklist for all recruitment and placements. This will include references.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of reference from reputable source with record of verification.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed the actions submitted appropriate in addressing the 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was always an adequate number of adults available to the children.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained. There were 2 staff members and an adult on work experience working directly with 15 children aged 3-5 years.

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;*
 - (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (h) Attendance records were available detailing each individual child's arrival and departing time daily.
- (j) The person in charge reported that no medication had been given to the children attending the service.
- (k) Accident and incident records were available dated up to September 2021. The registered provider told the inspector that no accidents or incidents involving children had occurred since that date. The records that were available had sufficient detail and had been signed by a parent/guardian indicating the information had been shared.

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

The service had taken measures to support children's independence. The children used the toilet as needed with staff reminding and assisting them to wash their hands afterwards. Low level hooks were provided for children's bags and coats. An area with soft seating, cushions and books was available for children to rest or take a break from activities.

Staff demonstrated an awareness of the children's dispositions. Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and a family photograph wall. Staff told the inspector that they communicate with parents/guardians when children are arriving or leaving.

The inspector observed the staff interacting warmly with the children, engaging positively and supporting them when needed. They provided comfort when children became upset. The children brought food and drinks from home. The inspector observed lunch to be a social occasion with the children and adults sitting together and engaging in conversation.

Non-Compliance Information

1. It is acknowledged that some toys and equipment had been sourced following the previous inspection. However, the indoor area was still not adequately resourced to provide quality learning and play experiences for the number of children present at one time. Interest areas had limited resources. The outdoor area which had more space for free movement was not made accessible to the children until after lunch.
2. An individual plan or learning record was not available for a child who had significant developmental delay, to inform and progress the child's care, learning and experiences in the service.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider agreed to re-engage with Better Start National Early Years Quality Development initiative in relation to expanding children’s opportunities for play and learning. A re-referral was made by the inspectorate on 2 May 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider made contact with BetterStart and is due the first visit on 27 July. This will mean that the service can engage with them, take on board their advice, and make the necessary changes and it will be ready prior to next term. They will then come back out to the service after term begins to see how the changes are working when all the children are there. The service has made changes to the rooms and added extra resources. For the past two weeks the service has had an open-door policy, the children are calling it the “in out”, where they can stay in or go out, whichever they prefer. This has been very successful. The registered provider will ensure, by using the Siolta Practice Guide that the service is hitting all the targets for full learning possibilities.
2. The registered provider agrees that progress with this child has been informal, and this needs to be corrected in the future. The service currently receives information in relation to communication tools, transition to primary school etc. through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The registered provider will look for advice from the contact in AIM as to how the service can better this reporting and formalise it going forward. The registered provider will engage immediately with the contact in AIM and ensure that going forward there is a separate recording system for children with additional needs.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photograph of added resources and outdoor area in use.
2. No supporting documents submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate acknowledges the actions taken by the registered provider. Compliance with the regulatory requirement will be assessed on the next inspection.

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 registered provider took the following measures to safeguard the children in attendance:

General Safety:

- Emergency doors were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of an emergency.
- External entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cables and leads were secured out of reach of children.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of reach of children.
- Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping.

Infection Control:

- The premises and equipment were observed to be in a clean condition.
- Children's hands were washed at required times including before eating and after using the toilet.
- Tables were cleaned before children had their lunch.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider reported that no child had been given medication since the previous inspection. Staff demonstrated a knowledge of the safety procedures to follow should a child require medication when attending the service including obtaining parent/guardian consent and recording the administration.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Warm water was not available at the wash-hand basin in the sanitary facilities for effective handwashing.
2. Toilet paper was stored on the cistern of the toilets posing a risk of cross infection.
3. The pedal on the bins in the sanitary facility and pre-school room were not operating. The inspector observed staff and children handling the lids of the bins to dispose of waste, posing a risk of cross infection.

4. Perishable food items brought from home were not stored below 5°C to prevent foodborne illness.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Hot water had not been turned on. Turning on the hot water will now become part of the service's daily routine prior to opening the preschool. In winter this happens automatically with the heating, in summer staff need to make sure it is done manually and have begun to do this daily.
2. The toilet roll holder has now been fixed. The registered provider will ensure that if this loss of a toilet roll holder happens again, it will be repaired more promptly.
3. New pedal bins have been sourced and put in place. The registered provider will ensure that if the pedal bins are not working, they will be replaced promptly.
4. A fridge has been put into the playroom to store children's lunches during the session.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographs of corrective actions taken.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed the actions to adequately address the non-compliances.

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) Both staff held a recognised certificate in first aid for children valid until 17 February 2024.

(2)(b) The first aid box was adequately equipped and available for use by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) It is acknowledged that the first aid box was accessible to staff. However, the box was not in a conspicuous position as it was stored inside an unlabelled cupboard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has supplied a first aid sign which is now stuck to the front of the cupboard that stores the first aid box. The registered provider will ensure that the first aid sign remains in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic image of first aid sign on cupboard.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed the actions to appropriately address the non-compliance.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The registered provider had a record of the type of smoke alarm system in the premises and the checks that had been carried out.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Records were not available of fire drills carried out.
 - (b) Records were not available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) The fire drill record had been taken down from the wall to be filled in and not put back up. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was not able to locate the record. It has now been found and placed on the wall where the service keeps it.
 - (b) Fire extinguishers have been inspected and certificate issued. The registered provider will check the date on the servicing of the fire extinguishers in September, January and April to ensure that they are up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1)
- (a) Record of fire drills – most recent dated 01 June 2023.
 - (b) Copy of certificate of maintenance for firefighting equipment dated 24 May 2023.

Summary Comment

The actions have been deemed to adequately address the non-compliance.