

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY014				
Name of Service:	Ayrfield community Playgroup				
Address of Service:	St. Paul's School (Room 13), Ayrfield, Dublin 13, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	D13 PK10				
Name of Registered Provider:	Valerie Dunne				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	12/12/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>16</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	16	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford
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

Ayrfield Community Playgroup is a community service that provides sessional care and education to children aged from 2 years 8 months to 5 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and offers two sessions per day from 8:30am until 11:30am and 11:45am until 2:45pm Monday to Friday. Ayrfield Community Playgroup operates from a care room located in St Paul's Junior School on the northside of Dublin city. The service can access the school shared outdoor area when not in use. The care room has large play equipment including a slide and ride on toys for use by the children indoors.

Staffing

The service employs four staff members one of whom is the registered provider. Three staff were working directly with the children 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The morning session operated by the service was inspected.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) (6A) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1), (3), Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15 (1)(a)-(j), Record of pre-school child,
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid and
- Regulation 28 Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of pre-school child.

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 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

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and*
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.*

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(2) The staff files of four staff employed in the service were reviewed.

(a) The following references were available from a past employer.

- Two validated written references were available for two staff members and one validated written reference for one staff member.

(b) The following references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- Two validated written references for one staff member and one reference for one staff member.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for four staff members. The service also 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 as no staff member had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) On review of documentation available four staff members working with the children had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A) One staff member was employed under the scheme Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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) The correct minimum adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.

(3) There were 3 adults working directly with 16 children aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years during the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) to (i)

On review of the documentation relating to a sample of 10 children’s files within the service, the required information and detail was available and complete.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care room was bright and spacious and laid out in areas that enabled the children to freely choose their activities and play materials.
- All equipment and materials in the care room were appropriate to the age and development of the children. The furniture provided in the room was low level and age appropriate with toys and play materials accessible. Children’s artwork was on display, and it reflected the current curriculum of preparation for Christmas.
- The areas of interest available included a home area with kitchen, pots and pans, construction space with blocks and bricks, gross motor toys such as ride in cars, scooters, tricycles, slides, and balance boards. A rest area with soft mats, cushions and books was provided and it was available throughout the session.

art 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:

- Access to the premises was through the main school building and by an entry phone system. The door of the care room was securely locked and prevented the risk of a child exiting the service unsupervised and the unauthorised entry of an adult.
- All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were available in the sanitary facilities used by the children, these included thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and bins. Children were observed to wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet.
- Children's perishable food from home was refrigerated on arrival to the service and staff were observed cleaning the tables before and after snack.
- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care room and sanitary facility. The care room and sanitary facility had open windows to extract any stale air.

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)
Four staff trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) certification were available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)
(a) and (b) A first aid box was suitably equipped, accessible and available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance to cover the number and age profile of the children enrolled in the service with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.