

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY182

Name of Service: Seven Dwarfs Playgroup

Address of Service: Holy Family Parish Centre, 13 Prussia Street, Dublin 7, Co. Dublin

Eircode: D07 A097

Name of Registered Provider: Marion Bradley/Smithers

Service type: Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 16/10/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C Kerrigan
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

Seven Dwarfs Playgroup is a community-based service providing sessional care for children aged between 2 and 6 years of age.

The service is open Monday to Friday during the hours of 08:45 to 12:15 and from 13:00 to 16:00, 38 weeks of the year.

The preschool is located on the ground floor within a community centre. The large care room is partitioned into 2 pods, referred to as pod 1 and pod 2. Adequate sanitary facilities are available to the children during the operational hours of the service. A spacious hall area is adjacent to the pods which children have access to.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 4 staff members. On the day of inspection, the registered provider and 4 staff members were present providing direct care to the children. The manager of the community centre who is involved in the service in an administrative capacity was also 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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The Inspection focused on examination of compliance under the following Regulations:

- Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment – (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(3)(4)
- Regulation 10 Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school services
- Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(3)(8) (c)
- Regulation 14 (a)
- Regulation 19(a)
- Regulation 23
- Regulation 25(1)(2)(a)(b)
- Regulation 28

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 10 Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school services. The scope of the inspection included the large room which was divided into Pod 1 and Pod 2.

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

(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,*

(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 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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who can deputise as required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present at all times throughout the inspection.

(2)

The files of 6 adults were reviewed as part of the inspection, to include the registered provider who works in the service, 4 members of staff and the centre manager.

- (a) The registered provider had 9 written and validated references from a past employer for 6 adults.

(b) The registered provider had 3 written and validated references from a reputable source for 3 adults.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, 4 staff members and the community centre manager who provides support to the service in an administrative capacity. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every 3 years.

(3) The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Regulatory Notice by ensuring that all references and Garda vetting procedures were completed prior to any staff member being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school.

(4) The registered provider and 4 staff members who worked directly with the children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Qualification Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(d) Police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who lived outside of this jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting has been applied for.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of Police Vetting application submitted.

Summary Comment

Regulatory compliance remains outstanding for Regulation (9)(2)(d) until the processed police vetting has been obtained and kept on the staff member's file.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the required written policies, procedures, and statements specified in schedule 5 were in place in the service.

The content of the following policies was reviewed and met the requirement of the regulations:

- Policy on Behaviour management.
- Complaints Policy
- Policy on Administration of Medication
- Policy on Infection Control
- Fire Safety Policy
- Inclusion Policy
- Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children
- Policy on Healthy Eating
- Settling In Policy

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 were adequate numbers of adults working directly with the children attending the service. There were 5 adults working with 18 children aged from 2.8 years to 5 years.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were maintained as follows:
- Pod 1: 10 children being cared for by the registered provider and 2 staff members.
 - Pod 2: 8 children being cared for by 2 staff members.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Each child's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool as evidenced by the following ways.

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes were a relaxed and social event with staff sitting and interacting with the children. The service had a Healthy Eating Policy which was reflected in the children's own snacks and drinks which were brought from home.
- Drinks were made available to children in their individual bottles throughout the morning. Children's food preferences were prioritised, for example one child could not eat their lunch brought in from home, an alternative was supplied promptly, meeting the nutritional requirements for this child at this time.
- Children had opportunities to move freely and participate in exploratory play throughout the care rooms. The staff spoke to the children in a respectful child centred manner, the inspection took place at the beginning of the school year however staff were able to discuss each child's individual preferences and needs.
- Children were supported in toilet use depending on their individual needs. Toilet accidents were dealt with in a prompt and dignified manner. The toilet was accessible for children as they needed throughout the morning.

Supporting Relationships

- Staff demonstrated warmth and kindness towards the children by using their individual names, using soft vocal tones and through play to promote co-operation and demonstrate positive behaviours. For example, when a child chose to play alone whilst others engaged in group singing a member of staff sat with the child quietly in a non-intrusive manner supporting the ethos of inclusion.
- During the inspection staff were noted to have varying degrees of experience, there was evidence of teamwork within the rooms transitioning through activities and dealing with challenging behaviours when they arose, speaking to each other in a respectful and professional manner.
- The preschool communicates with parents on a daily basis via a dedicated software mobile application whilst also taking opportunities at pick up times/ drop off times to discuss the children's day.

Physical and Material Environment

- Pod 1 and 2 were inviting spaces for play and exploration, there were diverse areas of interest including a home area (pots, pans, kitchenware, appliances), construction area (sensory play, jigsaws, small plastic construction blocks), mark making materials and real-world play area.

- The children sat at low levelled tables for eating and playing both of which were relaxed and unhurried events promoting socialisation skills. The furniture in the room was adequately maintained and clean. Tables available were of differing sizes and shapes, inviting play with various numbers of children throughout the space. There was sufficient numbers of tables and chairs for children attending the service.
- All toys and materials in the Pods were appropriate to the age and the developmental stage of the children attending the service. They were stored at eye level and clearly labelled ensuring they were readily available to children to promote independent play.
- The Hall area was located adjacent to Pod 1 and 2, it provided a bright inviting space in which children could freely move and play. There was a selection of gross motor promoting toys, slides, rockers and soft matting. A small outdoor space could be accessed via pod 1, it contained a small selection of sensory toys. There was a small brightly coloured Outdoor space that could be accessed via POD 1 with a small selection of sensory toys.

Non-Compliance Information

A suitable rest area was not adequately available to children in both rooms. During the inspection a child was noted to be sleepy, resting against a play kitchen, an adequate rest area was not available to this child to promote their comfort.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Soft cushions and mats have been placed in each room to facilitate rest.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photo evidence of rest area submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 19.

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 accessed via a doorbell of which a staff member permits access. Parents are permitted to enter the service to pick up children from their assigned Pods.
- The hall area was adjacent to the Pods; it was fully enclosed and secure.
- Daily risk assessments were undertaken within care rooms, as noted by records on the wall and on the electronic application.
- There was no trailing flexes, sharp objects, kettles and toasters were placed on high level shelving away from children.
- Hazardous materials such as medicines and cleaning equipment were stored out of reach from children on high shelving or in locked presses.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food items brought in from home were refrigerated in children’s individual bags until snack time.
- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing potential cross contamination. Single use paper towels were in use throughout the service for hand drying purposes.
- Foot pedalled bins were in use throughout the service ensuring appropriate disposal of waste.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were recorded monthly, staff members were able to discuss how these drills were conducted outlining fire drill practices.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Handwashing practices were noted to be inconsistent throughout the service.
 - No handwashing was undertaken prior to snack time in Pod 2.

- Liquid soap was out of reach of children in the sanitary area used by pod 2, preventing adequate hand hygiene practices.
- There was no hot water available for handwashing practices in the sanitary area of Pod 1.

Administration of Medication:

2.

There was no care plan available for emergency medication which was prescribed to a child within the service. This is at variance from the service policy on medication administration which states that a care plan is required for each child prescribed medication. Staff were unfamiliar with the emergency administration procedure. This poses a potential risk to the child who may require urgent care.

Fire Safety:

3. A fire exit in Pod 1 was partially blocked with storage boxes, which was removed during the inspection when brought to the attention of the person in charge.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Hot water tap is now working, liquid soap has been placed at eye level.
Children's records are to be updated after handwashing on a mobile app, with supervisors checking the sanitary areas and for records on handwashing daily.

Administration of Medication:

2. A new policy on Administration of Medication has been implemented within the service. Personalised care plans for children requiring medication states that medication will be placed in a zip loc bag/box with a photo and name of the specific child. The care plan is to be placed on the wall. Permission slips to be signed by parents and staff prior to administration. Training was undertaken on medication administration and record keeping. The service has stated that training around specific medication administration will be undertaken a week prior to children starting the service with ongoing training given as needed.

Fire Safety:

3. Staff have been re-educated on the safe storage of boxes in relation to fire exits.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Administration of Medication:

2. Updated policy has been submitted.

Fire Safety:

3 Photographic evidence has been submitted along with the service stating re-education of fire safety being discussed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

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 were 4 staff members trained in First Aid to include FAR immediately available to children attending the service.

(2)(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position within the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The sessional service was insured for a maximum of 30 children with insurance commencing 28 March 2024 and ending 28 March 2025.