

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY388
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Name of Service:	St Matthews Playgroup
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Address of Service:	5 Drumfinn Park, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D10 AV96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Doran
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown drive, County Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill
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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Description of service

St Matthews Playgroup is registered to provide sessional care and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for children aged from 2 – 6 years. The service is community based and operates Monday to Friday from 9am - 12pm. The service is in an urban, residential area, in Dublin Southwest and operates from adapted commercial premises. The children’s care and education is provided in one open plan room. An outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

In total three adults are employed in the service including the registered provider. On the day of inspection three adults worked directly with the children.

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.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

9(1)(a)(b), (2) (c) Management and Recruitment

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels

15 (1)(a)-(i) Record of Pre-School Child

19(1)(a)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child

23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

25 (1), (2)(a) and (b)

26 (1)(a), (b) and (4)

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1)(a)-(i) 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, 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

(2) In total three adults are employed in the service. The registered provider confirmed no new adults were employed since the last inspection. Regulation 9(2)(a) -(d) and (4) were found compliant on the last inspection. Therefore, only Regulation 9(2) (c) was inspected as detailed.

(c) Garda vetting was available for three adults the Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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) 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 sixteen children attending being supervised by three adults on the day of 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 sample of ten records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
 - (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
 - (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
 - (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
 - (f) The record available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
 - (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
 - (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
 - (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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. Parents provided a nutritious snack for their children. Children were offered their morning snack around 11 am. Children sat together and engaged in conversation with each other and staff. The atmosphere was relaxed children were given plenty of time to enjoy their snack. Staff offered children water or milk with their snack. A helper system was in place to support children's development and sense of belonging. Children were familiar with their care givers and the daily routine. Staff interacted warmly with the

children in their care throughout the inspection and they demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care.

Play was child led and children were observed to choose the activity they wished to engage in. Staff were observed to offer children a choice when doing structured work. Some children chose to do a tabletop activity with play dough while other listened to a staff member read a story in the cosy area.

The care room had an open plan design which allowed staff to easily supervise children in their care. Toys and equipment were easily accessible from low level shelving provided. Designated areas of interest included a home corner, construction area, dress up, messy play and a library area. Each area was well resourced with suitable props and equipment. A designated rest area was available to allow children to take a break from activities. Staff reported they communicate daily with parents at the drop off and collection time. A what's app group is also available to share additional information with parents.

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:

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- Entry to the service was secure to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. A bell system was in place to monitor visitors before granting access.
- There were no trailing flexes or cables observed.
- Toys and play equipment was safe for the age group using them and in good condition.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules were maintained. Staff were observed cleaning tables prior to snack and sweeping the floor after.
- Pedal bins were used for the disposal of waste.
- Children were supervised washing their hands after messy play and prior to eating. Staff were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff were familiar with the medication policy when spoken to and records of medication given previously were reviewed and completed correctly. Staff confirmed none of the children attending are currently on medication.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clearly signed and unobstructed.

Outing:

- The service has an outings policy. There were no outings conducted on the day of inspection.

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) The registered provider ensured a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the pre-school. Three adults working directly with the children had first aid responder certificates that were valid until the 14 February 2027

(2) (a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the pre-school room and readily available at all times for the pre-school children.

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) The last fire drill was completed on the 30 September 2025.

(b) The maintenance record for the fire extinguisher was available and dated the 25 June 2025 and the maintenance record for the smoke alarm was available and dated the 08 April 2025.

(4) A notice for the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position on the notice board in the main reception