

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL116			
Name of Service:	Holywell Childcare Ltd			
Address of Service:	Holywell Educate Together National School, Holywell, Swords, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	K67 AP99			
Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Boyne			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	06/02/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	9
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15			
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne			
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

Holywell Childcare is located in the Holywell Educate Together school in Swords Co. Dublin. The premises is one classroom and sanitary facilities. The children have access to a secure area in the school yard for outdoor play. A sessional service is provided to children aged between 2 and 5 years old. The service is registered to open from Monday to Friday for a morning session 8.45 to 11.45am and for an afternoon session 12.45 to 3.45pm

Staffing

The registered provider, who does not work in the service, employs six staff within the service to include the person in charge in a managerial role and five childcare staff. On the day of inspection, four childcare staff worked directly with the children to include two of the staff who were employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

Methodology

Tusla 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 an examination of compliance under regulations as follows:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4)

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)

Regulation 15 Record of a preschool child (a) to (i)
Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child
Regulation 25 First Aid (1)(2)(a)(b)
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1)(a)(b) (4)

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool Child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

The scope of the inspection included the one classroom of the service.

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 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, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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

A registered provider ensured that-

- (a) the service had 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 was being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person was on the premises,
- (c) there was clear management structure in the service that identified the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The files of six adults were reviewed as part of the inspection, to include the person in charge who is the manager of the service, two childcare staff members and three staff members employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

(a) Two written and validated references were available in relation to three adults from a past employer. One written and validated reference was available in relation to three adults from a past employer.

(b) One written and validated reference was available in relation to three adults from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance, with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for two adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the five adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs

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)(3) On the day of inspection, there were four adults working with 19 children, aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years old, for the morning session from 8.45am to 11.45 am and there were three adults working with nine children aged 2 years 8 months to 6 years old for the afternoon session from 12.45am to 15.45pm with ratios being maintained.

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 ten children's files within the service, the required information and detail was available and completed for each of the ten files reviewed.

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

(1)(a) **Basic Needs:**

- Lunchtime was at 11.16 am for the children who attend the sessional service. The children's water bottles were available in the classroom for the children to drink.
- Lunchtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable event, with children given time to sit at low tables appropriate to their ages. Children were observed to eat independently, but staff were on hand to help as required, supporting independence and wellbeing.
- Toilet visits were completed before lunchtime and as needed to ensure each child's comfort.
- Children had access to the outdoor play area during the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. The atmosphere within the service remained calm and pleasant throughout the inspection.
- Staff interacted playfully with the children, by sitting at their level at the tables during lunchtimes, and tabletop activities of painting, playing playdough, sensory sand play and building magnetics and by sitting on the floor when playing cars on the road map rug.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The classroom was bright and laid out in a variety of designated areas of interest for the children with activities including.
 - Home areas (play kitchen with supporting equipment, dolls and doll accessories, shop and cash register, hairdressers table with supporting equipment, dress up),
 - Construction areas (wooden building blocks, small and large plastic bricks, stickle bricks, clicks, magnetics, trains and train tracks,)),
 - Tabletop activities (pegs and peg boards, wooden puzzles and jigsaws, colouring and arts and crafts),
 - Small world play (dinosaurs, farm animals, garage, trucks, cars and road map rug, doctors set),
 - Sensory area (boxes with sand and supporting equipment.)
 - A rest area was available in the classroom to enable children to rest and take a break from activities, they consisted of a couch with cushions and books.
 - The classroom had a wooden indoor climbing frame with stairs and a ramp, for gross motor activity.

All the materials and equipment in the classroom was suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending nurturing children's independence, ability to make decisions, and develop their play opportunities

- The furniture provided was low level and suitable to the needs and age of the children. There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the classroom.
- Each child's identity and belonging were reinforced within the service classroom with the use of pictures of the children and their extended family displayed on the wall and also available in family picture books. This can provide familiarity and comfort to children.

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:

- Attendance records were available for review, completed and accurate.
- The pre-school children were supervised at all times during the session.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The temperature of the classroom was recorded as 20.4°C at 10.52am, within the recommended ambient temperature of 18 - 22 °C.
- The outdoor area was enclosed securely for safe and suitable use by the children.

Infection Control:

- The premises and equipment were visually clean.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included liquid hand soap and paper towels were available in the classroom and in the sanitary facility.
- Handwashing was completed before lunch, after a painting activity and after toilet visits.
- Children lunches which were brought from home, were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Tables were cleaned in preparation for snack, by staff.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Thermostatically controlled warm water was not available in the adult sink in the classroom, the temperature of the water recorded by the inspector was 50.0° C at 10.54am and 49.1° C at 13.10pm. It is acknowledged that this tap was a mixer tap and when children used it to wash their hands after a painting activity, they were fully supervised by staff at all times.

Fire Safety:

2. Fire Drills were not carried out by the service monthly with no fire drill completed in September 2024 and December 2024, posing a risk of safety. It is recommended that fire drills are completed every month, this promotes fire safety awareness.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. A thermostat was installed under preschool room sink and a new tap over the midterm break. Plumber has set thermostat to just below 430° C when tap turned to fully hot water flow. This has been checked by preschool staff each morning of 24th, 25th and 26th February to ensure working and recordings demonstrate that the hot water temperature is below 430° C each morning. This will be checked regularly going forward to ensure water temperature maintained by thermostat.

Fire Safety:

2. Monthly fire drills will be completed going forward – January 2025 and February 2025 have been completed and the agenda point of ‘fire drill date to be agreed’ has been added to the monthly team meeting agenda template.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic Evidence

Fire Safety:

2. Copy of Agenda template

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. Under regulation 23 , the non-compliances outlined above have been adequately addressed.

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 service provided evidence that three adults were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2) (a) (b) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the classroom and in the event of an emergency and was available to the adults responsible for the 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) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 17 January 2025.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment was last serviced on the January 2025 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 6 February 25.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed throughout the service.

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