

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL270
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Name of Service:	Small World Pre School
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Address of Service:	Phibblestown Community Centre, Phibblestown Road, Ongar, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D15 XT85
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernie Smith
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	30/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	No.
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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:	T. Nelson
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

Established since 2004, Small World Pre-school provides a sessional service for children aged between 2 years 7 months to school going age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. Currently the session is delivered from 9.00am to 12.00 noon. A school aged service is also provided in the afternoon.

The service is located upstairs in Phibblestown Community Centre and consists of 3 care rooms, Red Butterfly, Yellow Butterfly and the Caterpillar rooms. There are sanitary facilities available to the children and staff, and the service had access to two outdoor spaces.

Staffing

The service employs a total of eleven staff. There were eight staff present on the day of the inspection, including the registered provider who works in the rooms providing care to the children and manages the oversight of the service.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3)(4); 11(1)(3)(8); 19(1)(a), 23 ,25 and 26.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

- Regulation 19 (1)(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Caterpillar and Red Butterfly Rooms and did not include the Yellow Butterfly Room.

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
- (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.

(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 had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of ten staff were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(2)

(a) Eleven validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Eight validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the ten adults.
 - (d) Five adults who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (3) There was documentary evidence in place that the checks were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) There was documentary evidence available for nine staff who worked directly with children attending the service that they 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 , Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b) One validated written reference from either a previous employer or reputable source was not available for one staff member.
- (4) There was no documentary evidence available for one staff member who worked directly with children attending the service that they 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a)(b) A second written reference from a reputable source, which was validated by the designated person in charge of the service on 28.06.23 was submitted. All staff files have been checked to ensure that validated references are held on file. Each staff file now has a check list to ensure that all documents are up to date.
- (4) The staff member was taken out of ratio for preschool and is now working with afterschool children where they can be counted in ratio. Staff member has completed a Level 8 degree and is awaiting their transcript. They have sent a query to the QQI help desk to see what level QQI they can be put at until they get the results of the final level 8 exam.
- Preventative action: Ensure all new staff have their final certificate of QQI level 5 or above before they are employed in the preschool setting.

The Recruitment Policy has been updated and highlights that qualifications are validated before starting work in playschool.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated reference.

Evidence of query regarding current qualification level.

Updated Recruitment Policy.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 8 adults working with 33 children present on the morning of the inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times. They were maintained as follows:

- Red Butterfly Room - 3 adults to 10 children aged between 3 to 4 years.
- Caterpillar Room - 3 adults to 12 children aged between 4 to 5 years.
- Yellow Butterfly Room - 2 adults to 11 children aged between 3 to 5 years.

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) The registered provider ensured each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service as observed by the following:

Basic Needs:

- The children had a snack provided by parents, which they ate seated at the table with staff members, and the mealtime experience was observed to be a sociable occasion for children. Staff discussed how there is food available for children who may forget to bring a lunch.
- Staff were observed to follow the needs of children when they required the toilet and supported them in a respectful manner; facilitating them to use the toilet independently.
- Children's behaviours were supported through positive strategies such as being able to read the children's cues, observation, predicting behaviours and intervening when necessary.
- There were individual care plans available for those children who required them, which identified goals for children, and the resources required to meet these goals.
- The children were observed to have the freedom to move through the rooms and independently choose their own play activities.

Supporting relationships:

- Respectful and positive interactions were observed between adults and children. The atmosphere in the service was relaxed and child centred, and the staff were observed to be responsive to the children and listened to their choices. For example, the children in the Caterpillar Room said they would prefer to play in the hall rather than outside, and staff facilitated this choice.
- The service supported the children's transitions through their daily routine using strategies such as visual displays and the use of now and next for example, 'we're going to tidy up in five minutes and then we're going to do circle time'. Staff discussed how they supported the transition to primary school by arranging visits to the local schools, and developing written records on the child's strengths, challenges along with useful strategies to support the child's transition to primary school.

- Relationships with parents were facilitated using an online software application where news and updates on the child's progress is shared. Updates are also shared via a closed social media platform.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The environment supported the children learning and development through the following:
 - The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and appropriate for children attending.
 - Toys, equipment and play materials were easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
 - An area was available which allowed a child to take a break from activities and rest.
 - There was defined interest areas including a library and rest area, a well-supplied arts and craft area, a construction area and a home area. Children moved freely between these areas and were observed engaging in play experiences which supported a range of developmental areas such as language, cognitive, social and physical development.

Programme of Activities:

- Children were observed to enjoy both free play and structured play activities facilitated by adults. For example in the Caterpillar Room children were able to choose between a play dough activity or their own choice of tabletop activity followed by circle time which was led by the adults, where children were observed to enjoy songs and movement activities.
- There was evidence of planning for children's learning, where long term plans were developed, and these evolved to facilitate the emergent interests of children. The current theme in the Red Butterfly Room was 'under the sea' which staff discussed was as a result of children's recent visits to the beach. Products of artwork produced by the children which reflected this theme were displayed throughout the room.
- Positive strategies were used to support children's learning such as timing at a pace to suit the children and routines which supported comfort and predictability.

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:

- Staff collected and dropped children to their parents from the entrance to the community centre. Door locks which were up high out of reach of children were on all of the care room doors. This prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining entry.
- The staircase was well lit, with a suitable handrail in place.
- The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents and hazardous equipment.
- There was a daily risk assessment in place where the rooms were checked for hazards.
- A record was maintained of accidents and incidents that occur in the setting.
- Staff discussed how children must wear suncream on warm days for outdoor play and there was evidence of reminders to parents to ensure children wear suncream on these days.

Infection Control:

- The premises were in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available.
- Liquid soap, thermostatically controlled warm water and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash before and after mealtime, and the tabletops were wiped before lunch.
- Lidded, pedal operated bins were available throughout the rooms and sanitary facilities.

Administration of Medication:

- Care plans were available for children requiring medication, and staff were aware of the practices around this.

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 a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

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 28th April 2023.
(b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in April 2022 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 5th April 2023.

(4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms