

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL287		
Name of Service:	Sunbeams Playschool		
Address of Service:	6 Fulham Street, Balbriggan, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K32 NR04		
Name of Registered Provider:	Paul Mullen		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM Not applicable.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Business Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly		
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

Sunbeams Playschool is situated in a residential area and provides a sessional/part-time service to children from 2 to 6 years. The service operates from 9:00am to 13:30pm and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The Playschool is attached to the registered providers home and consists of 1 care room with sanitary facilities. An outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs a designated person in charge and 3 staff members who all work directly with the children and were all present on the day of the inspection. Two members of staff are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the main room in Sunbeams Playschool.

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*

(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

- (1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present in the building when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 9.40am.
- (2) The files of the 4 staff in the service were reviewed. Garda vetting was reviewed for 5 adults to include the registered provider. The following was recorded:
- (a) Seven written validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) One written validated reference was available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 5 adults including the registered provider. 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 adult had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 4 staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in 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, Disability and Equality.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service. There were 4 staff members working directly with 18 children on the morning of the inspection.

(2) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 4 adults, including the person in charge working with 18 children aged 2 years 9 months to 4 years 10 months on the morning of the inspection, two of whom were employed as part of the Access and Inclusion Model.

(8) (a) The registered provider ensured that there are 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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) Each child's learning and development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

Basic needs:

- Mealtimes were observed to be a social and pleasant experience for the children. Staff sat with children at snack time and engaged in conversations with the children. Children's lunches and water bottles were brought from home and included ham sandwiches, crackers, yoghurts and fruit including blueberries apples and mandarins. Children's water bottles were accessible to the children and stored on a shelf in the room and children were observed to access water bottles independently.
- Children's independence was supported. Children were free to move around the room and choose materials independently and tidied these away when they had finished their activity. Children also used the bathroom independently with staff support as needed.

- There was no outdoor play on the day of the inspection due to adverse weather conditions. However, the staff facilitated dancing and movement to music during circle time which supported gross motor movement for the children.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children and children were given praise and encouragement. Children were offered comfort and support when needed. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service.
- Staff were observed interacting with children at their level and engaging in children's play, for example with tabletop activities such as jigsaws and engaging in children's pretend play, for example children were observed having a picnic.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a 'Family Tree' displayed at children's level with photographs of children's families in the care room. In addition, each child had their own coat hook identified by children's names and photographs of the children and a birthday calendar included children's photographs. Children's artwork was displayed in the care room.
- Staff discussed that they communicate with parents to share information using an online messaging application.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms.
- Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children's independence in play. There were areas of interest in the service which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. This included a cosy/book area containing a child sized sofa with cushions for children to sit and relax and a selection of books which supported storytelling opportunities and children's language development. There was an art shelf to include a variety of art materials such as paper, pencils, markers, crayons, stencils, chalk and glue sticks to support creative art and mark making for children. Small world items included a large wooden dolls house with dolls furniture and people to support children's imaginative and dramatic play. There were tabletop materials such as jigsaws to support fine motor development and early literacy and numeracy learning. There was a home corner and role play area with kitchen, dolls and dress up rack with a range of dress up clothes, and real-life dress up items such as hats and bags to support imaginative and interactive play and

construction materials such as wooden blocks and plastic building bricks and transportation toys including train tracks, trains, cars, garage, trucks and diggers.

Programme of Activities:

- Children’s learning and development is documented in children’s learning journals which include photographs of children’s learning and development and children’s learning experiences to include a recent visit from the ‘Lollipop Lady’ and learning based on a recent theme of ‘Science week’. Staff carry out yearly and weekly planning which informs the curriculum.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given 5-minute verbal and visual cues using a clock timer to support them with the transitions. When the timer went off the children engaged well with tidying up, putting items away independently and also with adult support. Children sign in independently on a sign in board with their photographs on arrival to the service. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young 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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspector observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The large outdoor play area to the rear of the service was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with grass, cement and gravel.

Infection Control:

- Children’s lunch which was brought from home, were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Children were observed to hand wash before lunchtime, and this was encouraged and supported by staff.

Administration of Medication:

- There were health care plans available and displayed in the care room for children who required them.
- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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 that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. Two staff members were trained in First Aid Response (FAR), including the person in charge, both of whom were present on the day of the inspection. It is acknowledged that one staff member also held current paediatric first aid training who was present on the day of the inspection.

(2)(a) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the care room of the service.

(b) The first aid box was stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

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 monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 16 October 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available.

Firefighting equipment and fire alarm and detection system were last serviced on 11 November 2024.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the care room of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 22 children for the morning session with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.