

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL302
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Name of Service:	The Cottage Playschool
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Address of Service:	Mulhuddart Village, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D15 EKN1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susanne Browne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	No.
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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.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

The Cottage Playschool is a private service situated in an urban area on the north side of Dublin city. The service operates from a detached two storey converted building and has three care rooms namely; Room 1, Room 2 and Room 3. The service caters for children aged between 2 years 6 months to 6 years of age and operates a morning and afternoon session with staggered start and finish times from 9:15am to 12.15pm and 12:45pm to 3:45pm Monday to Friday. An outdoor area is available to the children to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs a total of four staff to include the registered provider and three childcare staff. There were four adults present on the day of inspection working 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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) (6A,)
- Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2),
- Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child,
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,

- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,
- Regulation 25 First Aid and
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety measures.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Pre-School Child and Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials, as a result the inspector spent time in Room 1 and not in Room 2 or Room 3.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment and Regulation 11 Staffing levels were assessed in all care rooms.

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

(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.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(2) The staff files of four employees employed in the service were reviewed.

(a)(b) Two written references were available for the registered provider along with two validated written references for three staff employed and working in the service from recent past employers or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for four staff members. 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 available from one country in respect of one staff member who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) On review of documentation available four staff members working with the children had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(A) One staff member was employed under the scheme Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 4 adults working with 27 children in the morning of the inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratios were maintained on the day of inspection as outlined below.

- **Room 1:** One adult was caring for ten children aged 3-4 years.
- **Room 2:** Two adults were caring for seven children aged 2-3 years.
- **Room 3:** One adult was caring for ten children aged 3-4 years.

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 complete.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Room 1 was bright with low level tables and chairs for eating and table-top activities. Children’s artwork was displayed. The room was laid out with various interest areas to include a home corner, construction area and arts and crafts section. A variety of materials, toys and books were available, and children were engaged in different forms of play. A rest and sensory area were available within the room.
- Each child’s identity and belonging were reinforced within the service with the use of the children’s pictures along with their extended family. This can provide familiarity and comfort to children. Children’s pictures were used to identify their belongings such as their chairs. Family pictures were displayed throughout the rooms in a position accessible to the children.
- An outdoor area was available where children had access to a climbing frame, see saws, a slide and ride on toys. The enclosed area was surfaced with artificial grass and had wall activities to include tubes and pipes with balls and sand.

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 premises were secured to prevent unauthorised entry or a child leaving unsupervised
- Emergency exits were kept clear
- Cleaning products and medicines were stored out of reach of children
- All cords and cables had been secured

Infection Control:

- The service was observed to be clean with staff attending to daily cleaning of table surfaces and chairs during the session and after the children left.

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water not exceeding 43°C, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were supported to wash their hands after using the toilet, before eating and after nose wiping.

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)

A person trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) certification was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) and (b) Three first aid boxes were suitably equipped, accessible and available to the children attending the service.

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 recorded fire drill that took place in the service was June 2024 before the service finished for the summer.

The registered provider confirmed that fire drills are completed monthly.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was present in the service, the fire extinguishers were serviced on the 25 October 2023 and the smoke alarms on the 11 April 2024.

(4)

A notice of the fire procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were clearly displayed in the main hallway of the service and the care rooms.