

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY238
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Name of Service:	St. Nicholas' Pre-School & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	St. Nicholas, National School, Claddagh, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 DX57
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Name of Registered Provider:	Olivia O'Reilly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway,
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

This sessional service is located in a classroom in the Claddagh national school in Galway city. It consists of one large playroom, sanitary facilities and designated secure outdoor area play areas. The preschool offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care programme from between 8.45hrs to 12.15hrs from Monday to Friday. Child size seating areas are available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. A child centred play based preschool curriculum with a Montessori focus is offered.

Staffing

There were three adults present on the morning of the inspection. There were four staff in total including the registered provider working in the service. One of the three staff provides inclusive practice support under the Access and Inclusion Model. The four adult staff hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualification Framework. The adult staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 ,11,16,19,23,25 and 26 These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

(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

(1)(a)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years Inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy, were available on the premises at all times when the pre-school children were present.

- (2)
- (a) & (b) The 8 validated references on file in respect of 4 adults were from past employers or from a source other than the previous past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 4 adults working in the service.
- (d) Police vetting was available on file as documentary evidence indicated, that one adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting.
- (4)
- The 4 childcare staff working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education between Level 5 and Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.
- (6A)
- The pre-school was receiving funding from the Department of Children Youth Affairs under the Access and Inclusion Model for 1 adult working in the service.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (3)
The registered provider ensured that at all times, the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.
On the morning of the inspection, there were 3 childcare staff working directly with and caring for 14 pre-school children. All children were between 3 and 5 years of age.
- (8)(c)
The registered provider ensured that there were 2 adults on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating. The preschool service is not operated single handedly.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

- (1)
(g) The service policies and procedures were available in hardback copy on request.
(h) The staff recorded the children's daily attendance in the roster book which detailed the children's arrival and departure times.
(i) Records were maintained of the daily attendance of the staff rosters which detailed the arrival and departure 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

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the healthy eating policy was available on request. At approx. 10.30hrs, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included cheese, ham, crackers, wraps, rice cakes, sandwiches, fruit pieces and yogurt.
- The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff. The staff encouraged and supported the children to be independent.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet.
- Staff were observed giving reminders / instructions to the children to support their personal care for example hand washing and using tissues.
- Rest and quiet areas were provided in the playroom in the form of soft child couches, cushions and matting beside the library to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.
- All the children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment, both indoors and outdoors. It was acknowledged that the children play in the outdoor play areas on a daily basis.

Supporting Relationships

- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the preschool including the child's likes, interests, preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages, by a daily private messaging app, by phone calls and by email. The service collated individual child profile / scrapbooks with photographs of the children engaged in activities and key adult observations.
- The staff were observed to be interested in the children, they spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests. The staff interacted in a positive way with the children, they sat at the children's level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and a good understanding of each child and were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions.
- The children were deeply engaged in play, with the staff providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.

- The children were given choice to decide the next activity and were made aware to prepare for transitions (for example at snack time, tidying up time and story time). Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- The children were observed at messy play, playing with sand and water, free play, making puzzles, using their imagination while playing with dinosaurs, singing songs and looking at books.
- The children and staff were observed playing together in the enclosed astro turf pitch where the children were running, chasing, crawling through hoops, using hula hoops and making bubbles.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. The children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' 'we are not in a rush', would you like help and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.

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 entrance door into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing, walls and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- The fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- Foot pedalled lidded bins were available in the sanitary areas and playroom.
- Tissues were widely available for the staff and children if required.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The service had an air filtration system to maintain the quality of air in the playroom.
- The service had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Safe Sleep:

- There was child size soft seating and matting where the child could rest, relax, or opt out of an activity if he/she chooses to.

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)
Two adults working in the service had appropriate first aid training for children and were always available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
A suitably equipped first aid box was available.
- (a) It was stored safely in a conspicuous position in the service.
- (b) The first aid box was available to children at all times.

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 written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service.
- The last recorded fire drill was in 25/4/2024.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment the last service dated 29/03/2024.

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The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 11/01/2024.

- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.