

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK069
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Name of Service:	Skough Hill Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Skough Hill, Owing, Piltown, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	E32 TF43
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Name of Registered Provider:	Joan O’Gorman
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Offices Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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

Skough Hill Playgroup is a rural sessional service in Owinging, Co. Kilkenny. The service is based in an extension of the registered provider's home. The care room is L-shaped with an adjacent office. The sanitary area is located off the care room.

The service is registered to care for up to 18 preschool children aged from 2 to 6 years old. The operating hours are from 09:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday.

There is a large secure grassed area to the side of the house.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two staff members and also works 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the areas of governance/ health, welfare, and development of children, safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15 – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service;

Regulation 17 – Information for Parents;

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child and 16(1)(h)(i)(k) Records of a preschool child.

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.

(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)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. There was a clear management structure with the line management included in the parental handbook.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed three staff files.

(a)(b) Validated references were available for review.

(c) Garda vetting was available for three staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documents available demonstrated that police vetting was not required for staff.

(4)

Upon reviewing the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

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)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 2 staff caring for 13 preschool children. The registered provider was included in the roster to care for the children and was available on the day for support if required.

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

A sample of 10 children's enrolment forms completed by the parents was reviewed as part of the inspection process and was found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (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) Information required was available on the day of the inspection and was available in the parental handbook, the attendance books, displayed on the parent's noticeboard, and in the children's record forms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The inspector reviewed the parental handbook and the recent newsletters, which the registered provider stated are either handed to or emailed to parents. The information required under this regulation is available to parents with regular updates.

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

The children's care room was bright and warm with natural light from the large windows to the front of the house. The interest areas were well-resourced and easily accessible to the children in the room. The registered provider described how the areas of interest change with the children's interests. For example, staff described how the majority of children attending are from a farming background, and the care room was well-resourced. The following was available to the children: farm toys and farm animals, model tractors, and accessories. The children were observed using wooden blocks to make farmyards, and a staff member described how they had observed the children using green floor mats as fields.

The toys, materials and equipment were of good quality, and there were sufficient quantities available. The L-shaped room was divided with low partitions to create a general play area, a reading space and an art and craft area. Throughout the room, children's artwork was displayed, and a family photo wall was displayed in such a way that children could access it easily.

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 a person trained in first aid was available at all times to the children. The registered provider and their deputy person in charge were trained to the level of a first aid responder.
- (2) (a)(b) The first aid box was stored in a dedicated first aid press in an easily accessible space and was available 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 firefighting 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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these was available on the day. The last fire drill was carried out on 7 October 2025.
- (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarms. The maintenance was carried out in November 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the care room and the exits of the building.