

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK073
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Square One Creche Preschool
-------------------------	-----------------------------

Address of Service:	23 Cedarwood Crescent, Loughboy, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	R95 K336
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Ring
-------------------------------------	------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	31/07/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	20
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

Square One Creche and Preschool provides a full day care, part-time and an Early Years Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) to children aged 1 to 6 years old. The service is also registered to provide a school age service. The service is open from 8.00 am to 6.00 pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks per year. The service is operated from a single storey detached house on a housing estate in Kilkenny city. The premises has been adapted and developed to provide a preschool service. There are three preschool rooms, toilets, nappy changing facilities, a hallway, a sleep room, a kitchen, and three large outdoor play areas to the rear of the service for the use of the children attending.

Staffing

There are six staff employed in the service. All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework. There was also a student in the service who was studying for a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education in the service on the day of inspection who was available to assist the qualified staff when required.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment
Regulation 10 Policies and procedures
Regulation 11 Staffing levels
Regulation 15 Record of preschool child,
Regulation 17 Information for parents,
Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play,
Regulation 22 Food and Drink,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire Safety,
Regulation 28 Insurance,

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.

(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)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were six staff employed in the service. All six staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection

(2)(a)(b)

There were 10 written and validated references available on file for staff working in the service. There were two references available on file for the registered provider which did not require to be validated.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for six staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the early years inspectorate regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for one staff member who had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for 6 staff working directly with the preschool children. These staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were policies and procedures in place in the service specified in Schedule 5 of these regulations. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on the administration of medication and the policy on the management of accidents and incidents 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.

(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

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children. During the morning, there were 20 children in the care of 5 staff members. During the afternoon there were 20 children in the care of 4 staff members.

There was a student of Early Years Care and Education in the service on the day of inspection who was available to assist the qualified staff as required. There was one staff member employed exclusively to prepare and serve snacks and meals in the service.

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

There was a registration form available in respect of each child enrolled in the service. A sample of 10 forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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

There was an information handbook for parents whose children were attending the service. The service proactively provided parents with information as required under regulation 17. The information handbook provided for parents provided an outline of the curriculum, the hours of operation, the funding schemes available,

contact details, the facilities available within the service. There was also information included on the day to day running of the service: healthy eating, medication management, behaviour management, complaints, fire safety and first aid.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There were child sized tables and chairs suitable for tabletop activities provided in both rooms which were open on the day of inspection. There was sufficient space for children and staff to move around and enjoy various activities and play. Both rooms were planned with the ages and stages of the children taken in to account. Open shelving units allowed children to freely access what they wanted to choose to play with. Preschool room 2 was well organised and equipped for the older children attending the service.

Many of the children were talking about which schools they would be attending in the new term starting in September. Staff had prepared a laminated photograph of the three different primary schools the children would be attending. There were also uniforms from the three schools in the dress up area. Staff who spoke to the inspector said these measures in place in the service helped the children to transition to their new start in junior infants in September. There was an extensive supply of art materials in the room. There was a display of bunting the children had all taken part displayed in the room. There was a large colourful family wall with photos displayed of the children and their extended families including many of their grandparents.

In the toddler room there was a variety of toys provided including books, jigsaws, small cars and plastic bricks. There was artwork displayed which children had made handprints with paint shaped as fish. There was a home

corner with a small kitchen and utensils. There was also a large tough tray filled with coloured rice for children to play with.

There were three outdoor play areas adjacent to the service. These spaces had been developed to provide a stimulating environment for the children. The play area accessed directly from the toddler room had been developed since the last inspection. There was a door recently built which allowed the children attending the toddler room to have direct access to their own outdoor play area. This area had been developed with due regard to the ages and stages of the children who were aged between 1 and 3 years of age. This area was covered in artificial grass. There was a unit with stainless steel bowls which allowed for water play, there were quality balance bikes and an accessible jungle gym for the children to climb.

The area accessed directly from the preschool room 1 which was closed on the day of inspection was resourced for the children with suitable play equipment such as bikes, a small bench and a hut to store toys and equipment. The ground surface composed of soft material to cushion the children when they fell. The third outdoor area was accessed directly from preschool room 2 and was extensively used on the day of inspection. This area had the added advantage as there was a roof covering part of the outdoor class room which allowed children to play outside when it was raining. Children were observed enjoying free play in the area.

Children were observed playing in groups together. Some were watering plants, others were riding on balance bikes, some children were digging in a large, raised sand pit, others were sitting chatting in a play house shaped like a tomato. There were also children observed enjoying water play. The staff who were looking after the children were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. There were two children who were settling in having moved from a junior room. Staff were observed to give these children extra care and attention to help them settle into their new group of friends. Staff who spoke to the inspector said the provision of the three outdoor play areas which had direct access from the three rooms in the service allowed them to facilitate as much outdoor play as possible in the service.

(b)

There was one sleep room situated just inside the front door. There were five full sized cots provided. The room was suitably shaded to provide a pleasant environment for the children to sleep and the staff to adequately observe them as they slept. There was an adequate number of sleep beds provided for older children to sleep on if required. There were rest area provided in both preschool rooms consisting of cosy child sized couches.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service promoted healthy eating and the majority of meals and snacks were supplied and cooked on the premises by the chef. Some parents had chosen to provide their own snacks for the children, and this was facilitated by the service. The dinner was served at mid-day and consisted of freshly made chicken korma and rice. Children were served second helpings when they requested more. The children were also served a platter consisting of freshly cut fruit.

The food provided was prepared and served to meet the stages of development of the children. For example, the food for younger children was a mashed/lumpy texture and the older children’s dinner was served whole. The meals were served in the rooms with the staff helping children to wash their hands and set the tables. Water was available to drink. Staff were observed to encourage the children to drink more water to keep them hydrated. On the afternoon of the inspection children were served sausages, crispy bread rolls and fruit.

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

Access to the service was gained through the front door which was secure on arrival and remained secure for the duration of the inspection. The outdoor areas in the service were safe, suitable and secure. Staff were observed to be vigilant in applying sunscreen to the children before they went out to play.

Infection Control

The service appeared clean. There were daily and weekly cleaning schedules maintained. The service had an infection control policy. Staff were seen to attend to children's personal hygiene during the day. The staff were observed to be vigilant in supporting the children in washing their hands before meals, after using the toilet and after messy play. There was warm water to support hand washing, liquid soap, disposable hand towels and foot pedal operated bins provided across the service.

Safe Sleep

The service had a designated sleep room. Individual bed linen was available, which was laundered daily. Staff who spoke with the inspector, were aware of safe sleep practices. A staff member was observed to stay with the sleeping children in the sleep room while they slept. Staff who spoke to the inspector were knowledgeable in the importance of maintaining safe sleep for the children in their care. For example, they were knowledgeable on how often a sleeping child is physically checked, recording of the observations such as colour, position and breathing rate and temperature of the sleep room. The staff carried out and recorded physical sleep checks every 10 minutes as per the service policy on safe sleep.

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)

There was a person trained in first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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 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)

There was a records of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out in July 2024.

(1)(b)

A record was maintained of when the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm were serviced in June 2024 and May 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the number of children who were present on the day of inspection.