

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK087
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Thomastown Community Kindergarten
-------------------------	-----------------------------------

Address of Service:	Grennan, Rock Road, Thomastown, Co. Kilkenny
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	R95 DC80
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Sabrina O'Brien
-------------------------------------	-----------------

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

Date of Inspection:	19/01/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	7
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	---

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

This part-time preschool service is situated just outside the town of Thomastown Co Kilkenny. A preschool service is provided to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age from 9.00am to 1.00pm and 2.00pm to 5.00pm. The premises is a converted detached bungalow next door to the registered provider's home. There are four interconnecting preschool rooms, toilets, nappy changing facilities, and two outdoor areas for the children to play in.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service. Two staff work directly with the children and one staff is employed as an administrator. 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. The service also has two volunteers who assist the qualified staff in the service.

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 regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 26 Fire safety measures.

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 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)(b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were three staff employed in the service, including the registered provider. There were also two volunteers whose files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were seven written and validated reference available on file from past employers for the staff members. There were three written and validated references available from reputable sources.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for the staff member and the two volunteers. The inspector noted the Garda vetting disclosures had been carried out in the past three years.

(d)

There was Police vetting available for one staff member and both volunteers who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence on file that the staff member 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.

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)

There were at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service. There was a volunteer available to assist the qualified staff member as required.

(3)
At 10.40am
There were 10 aged from 3 to 6 years in the care of 1 staff. At 12.40pm there were 7 aged from 3 to 6 years in the care of 1 staff.

(8)(a)
There were two staff on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

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)
The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together, playing together and making a cake for one on the children's birthdays. There was a daily activity plan on display. The activity plan included making bread and moulding with clay.

Children were encouraged to resolve their own differences by listening to their friends and taking turns. Children were observed enjoying a meal together on the morning of inspection. The registered provider lit a candle in the middle of the table. One child set the table with pottery plates and cups. The children were served a meal of pasta, cheese, carrots and cucumber. Children were offered extra portions if they liked. There was a 2-weekly menu on display which included all meals cooked in the service for the children. The registered provider spoke in soft tones to the children and created a calm atmosphere for children to share their news with their friends.

Children were observed making a birthday cake on the morning of inspection. A staff member prepared flour, cocoa powder, baking powder, sunflower oil, and cocoa powder in containers. A large bowl was provided for the

children, and they took turns stirring the ingredients. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they planned to store the cake in the fridge and bake the next day for the child's birthday.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. Of note were a series of wooden frames which the children used to make different shapes. Children were observed draping sheets over the frames to make houses to play inside.

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

The manager had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front gate which was secure on arrival. The outdoor play area was safe, suitable and secure.

Infection control:

The service appeared to be clean on the day of inspection. There was a fridge available in the service to store the food provided by the service for the children. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, washable face cloths and foot operated pedal bins. Children were observed washing their hands after using the toilet and after messy activities.

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 a first aid response course available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous 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 record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill that had taken place in the service was recorded in December 2023.

(b)

The annual record of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises was last carried out in December 2023. The fire alarm was last serviced in October 2023.

(4)

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