

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD021		
Name of Service:	Club Ardagh CLG		
Address of Service:	Ardagh, Co. Longford		
Eircode:	N39 FH68		
Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Mc Hugh		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon,		
Inspection undertaken by:	Aileen Kennedy		
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

Club Ardagh is situated on the grounds of the local national school within close proximity of the village of Ardagh Co. Longford. The premises consists of a preschool room on the ground floor and an additional room on the first floor. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care and sessional programme is provided from 09:30 to 12:30hrs for children from 2 to 6 years, Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year. Additionally, the service operates an afterschool programme between 14.00 and 18.00hrs. Two enclosed outdoor play areas are situated towards the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were five adults present and working directly with the children on the day of the inspection. The manager is supernumerary, and a relief arrangement is available to provide cover for staff breaks and in event of staff absence. Four of the staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 6, in Early Childhood Care and Education

The registered provider does not work in the service and has employed a person in charge for the operation of 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.

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, 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

There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

- (b) The manager was the person in charge and on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the manager or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

The five staff files were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b) Ten of the ten validated written references on file in respect of the five staff, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the five staff.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that one of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, and had the required police vetting.

(4) Four staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 6, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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)-

(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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the manager ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(3) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 25 children present. All children were aged between 2 years 7 months to 5 years. There were four staff directly caring for these children.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were 2 staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

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

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack without being rushed. The atmosphere during snack time was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults. The children sat at age-appropriate low-level chairs and tables for their snack.
- All children had access to a low drinks table, which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty and the children were observed to 'self-serve' on a regular basis.
- The staff encouraged and supported the pre-school children to feed themselves and offered assistance if required.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices. The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in a designated cosy area.
- The children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, doing action songs, table tops activities, playing house /kitchen and playing in the construction area. The children were observed linking, connecting, stacking, constructing, shape sorting, and drawing.
- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
having a key person system for each child,
showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language,

using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact, providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging, providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,

- On speaking with the manager, the inspector was informed that they verbally provide parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests, preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages and by phone calls.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, extending a child's activities, and initiating games / activities.
- The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. The inspector noted the staff acknowledged a child's achievements 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?' to allow children to critically think and explore.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed thoughtfulness, were supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play.

Physical and Material environment

- The pre-school rooms were bright and colourful. Low level tables and chairs were in place and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children. The rooms were laid out with clearly defined areas of play to include arts and crafts, large and small scale construction (plastic and wooden blocks and a large selection of work tools *and a work bench*) and manipulative materials; picture books, problem solving toys (e.g. jigsaws), role and pretend play (*e.g. play kitchen, dolls and accessories*), small world toys (*e.g. play animals, transport toys, play figures*).
- Soft seated areas were provided for circle time activities and as a reading area should a child wish to relax or opt out of activities. Wall art and visual displays added additional decorative features to the indoor play environments.
- The outdoor play area located to the side and rear of the premises supported a range of physically active play including running, ride on vehicles, ball games, climbing and messy play opportunities. On the day of the inspection the children played outdoors which demonstrated the services commitment to ensuring that outdoor play time played a significant part of children's daily routine in the service.

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

There was a healthy eating policy in the service and from observation, there was evidence that the foods consumed were adequate, nutritious, and varied. The adults advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by ongoing staff training, visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.

The children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included cheese, ham, crackers, sandwiches, rolls, wraps, fruit pieces, rice cakes and raisins.

Water was served with the snack and plates were provided for the children's lunches.

Clean and safe drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the session.

There was a designated fridge in the playrooms for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children's lunch boxes, for their snack times.

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:

- There was a buzzer access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure so that children could not leave the areas unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- Windows had restrictive access devices as a safety precaution.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- The manager clearly identified to the early year's inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk to the pre-school child.

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.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- A refrigerator was provided in the junior and senior preschool rooms, for the storage of perishable foods.

- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The manager had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to a child on the day of the inspection. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The door to the staff sanitary area had no system of security posing a potential access/safety risk.
2. An electric cable from the television was trailing in the senior preschool room which could pose a potential trip hazard.

Infection Control:

3. In the designated quiet area in the senior preschool room, two couches had evidence of being frayed and torn, thereby preventing effective cleaning.

Fire Safety:

4. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on 19th of June 2023 with no record of a drill carried out since the commencement of the service in September.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The person in charge submitted a written response on 09th of November to state

General Safety:

1. A lock has been placed on the outside of the Staff toilet door at a height which can not be reached by children and will remain locked when the toilet is not in use to ensure no access can be gained by children in the service.
2. The cable has been removed from the television.

Preventive Action

1. All staff will ensure the lock is placed on the door when they are finished using the Staff toilet

- All staff will ensure cables are secure as part of their daily risk assessments and will document this in the daily risk assessment report.

Infection Control:

Corrective action

- The couches have been replaced with new couches.

Preventive action

- The staff in the room will bring to the attention of the manager any equipment / toys that are faulty and need to be repaired or replaced. The manager in turn will be responsible for repairing / replacing the equipment or toys. This will also be documented in the Daily Risk Assessment.

Fire Safety:

Corrective action

- Our fire drill was carried out on 24/10/2023 and recorded on our fire drill record and placed on file in the fire safety folder.

Preventive action

- The manager will ensure fire drills are carried out monthly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence of the lock placed on the outside of the staff toilet door was submitted to the office of the early years' inspectorate.
- Photographic evidence of the cable removed from the television was submitted to the office of the early year's inspectorate.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence of the replaced couches in the senior preschool room was submitted to the office of the early year's inspectorate.

Fire Safety:

- Photographic evidence of the fire drill conducted on 24th of October.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) In the junior and senior preschool rooms, there were first aid boxes with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible by the adults and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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) Arrangements were in place to record fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated 19th of June 2023.
- (b) Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the smoke and fire detection system was dated 5th of September 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each playroom.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The annual service for the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment was last carried out in January 2022.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The person in charge submitted a written response on 09th of November to state

A service of our fire equipment was arranged and completed on 3rd of November 2023.

Preventive action

The manager has requested to be added to the yearly servicing of fire equipment with the service company and it has been added to the yearly risk assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the service record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment serviced on 3rd of November 2023

Summary Comment

The action taken and evidence submitted has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 26.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) From a visual inspection the premises were of sound and stable structure.

The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appeared to be structurally sound, weather/water-tight, to ensure protection from the weather elements.

The interior floors, walls and ceilings appeared to be well finished, with no evidence of mould.

(b) Exits were clearly identified and visible during service hours.

Electrical sockets were safe.

Floor coverings were secure and non-slip.

(c) There was natural lighting from the windows in the outer walls, in each playroom.

The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.

(d) The service had a cleaning schedule.

(e) There was one designated nappy changing area with a wall mounted changing unit on the ground floor sanitary accommodation.

There were three toilets and four wash hand basins for the children on the ground floor and two toilets and two wash hand basins for the children on the first floor.

There was a designated staff toilet with a wash hand basin on the ground floor.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, which was sessional service for 33 pre-school children and 35 school aged children included the following: -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.