

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK014
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Name of Service:	Athea National School Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Athea NS, Athea, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 F226
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Gleeson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/06/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Athea Primary school Pre-school is a community pre-school service located in a classroom within the Athea National School. It opened in 2009. It offers a morning sessional service from 9.30am to 12.30pm and an afternoon sessional service from 12.05pm to 3.05pm, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a large well-resourced classroom in the primary school. Sanitary facilities are located next door to the pre-school room. A well-resourced outdoor play facility and a sheltered outdoor area is available each day at the service.

Staffing

The registered provider is the Chairperson of Athea National School Board of Management. There is a designated person in charge who is responsible for running the Pre-school service. There are 3 additional staff employed at the service. All staff have the required Childcare qualifications.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8, 9, 11, 15, 19, 25, 28.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) In accordance with the Register of service the preschool offers a morning sessional service only. On the day of the inspection, it was noted that a second afternoon service is in operation since September 2021. The change in circumstances of the service were not forwarded to the National Registration office.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstances application to the Registration office which proposed the addition of an afternoon sessional service each evening. This change was approved and the service is now registered to operate a sessional service each morning and each afternoon.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the application and the letter of approval from the Registration office was forwarded by the registration office.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the service manager in relation to the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed.

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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The designated person in charge was present on the day of the inspection. There was a second person available to deputise if needed.

(b) The staff roster indicated that the manager or their deputy was always available on the premises.

(2)(a) Two written references were available for each adult working at the service. All references were validated.

(b) All references were from each person's previous employers or from a previous school or college.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all adults working at the service. All were updated in 2022. Garda vetting disclosure was also available for 1 student who was present on placement on the day of the inspection.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any adult working at the service.

(4) All adults working at the service had an appropriate qualification 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.

Compliance Information

(1) The manager of the service ensures that at all times the correct number of adults are rostered to work at the service. On the day of the inspection there were 3 adults present with 18 preschool children for the morning session. There were 3 adults present with 15 preschool children for the afternoon session. The adult/child ratio was correct for both sessions.

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

(1) A sample of 13 children's registration forms were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars in each of the forms examined:

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) provision to record 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 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 received by the child.

(i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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) BASIC NEEDS:

The services objective was to ensure that each child's learning, development and well-being was supported, taking all children's individual interests, needs and stage of development into consideration. There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service to encourage and educate the children about the importance of good nutrition. The parents supplied healthy snacks and drinks for the pre-school children. Perishable foods were stored in a refrigerator until required each day. Staff sat with the children at break time and actively encouraged mealtimes to be a social occasion. Childrens drinks were stored out of their bags and were easily accessible to them throughout the day. When outdoors their drinks were taken to the outside with them.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets which were located next to the preschool room. Foot pedal operated, lidded bins were used for the safe disposal of used tissues and handtowels. A nappy changing facility was accessible if required. Staff were available to assist children at all times if needed.

Lots of soft seating and rest areas were evident in the room for children to relax and rest if time away from active play was needed. The sensory room outside was used as a break out room for individual or small group activities. A large well resourced outdoor play area was used by the children for long periods each day. Here children had lots of opportunity for active movement and exploration.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The preschool room was a large, inviting, well-designed space which contained many interest areas for the children. Low level tables and chairs were accessible for dining at break time and for tabletop activities.

Imaginative play areas with dress up clothes, play kitchen and a home corner were available. A reading area with soft seating and a wide range of books, a construction area with building materials and an art and craft area with

paints, brushes and paper were also provided in the room. A large sand box was located in the hallway and children were observed spending long periods engaged in sand play.

All equipment was stored at children's eye level and was well labelled and easily accessible. Childrens artwork was visible around the room and posters on the alphabet and solar system were displayed in the library corner. Children were observed directing their own play, working in small groups and staff were observed joining with them when invited.

The facility had a well-resourced outdoor play area where children had an opportunity to play in all weather conditions. The outdoor area provided opportunities for fresh air, discovery, movement, exploration and activities exclusive to the outdoors. A planting area was provided, a space for jumping, running, climbing, ball games, balancing were also accessible. A large log cabin provided a sensory space for quiet relaxation time. A covered area in the playground provided shelter for the children in all weather conditions. Children also had access to an astroturf pitch at the rear of the school for sports 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 at all times a staff member on duty with an up-to-date certificate in first aid.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 34 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 1st of February 2023 and will expire on the 31st of January 2024.