

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK122
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Name of Service:	Meenkilly Pre School
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Address of Service:	Meenkilly National School, Meenkilly, Abbeyfeale, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 CXH1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Broderick
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	6
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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

Description of service

Meenkilly Pre-School is a sessional and a part time pre-school service located on the grounds of Meenkilly Primary School in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday from 9.30 am to 2.30 pm. There were 18 pre-school children present on the day of the inspection. The premises has 1 large playroom with sanitary facilities adjacent. For all outdoor play pursuits children have access to a large sensory garden and play area designed from all natural play materials.

Staffing

The registered providers of the service are the two staff members who manage and work at the service each day. A third staff member is also available. Each adult has completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. One staff member has completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in Early Childhood Care and Education settings.

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 registered providers, 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) The registered providers were present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered providers were present, and the staff roster indicated that one or both providers were always available on the premises.

(2)(a) All staff files were reviewed. Two written and validated references from past employers were available for each staff working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not obtainable for 1 staff member, references from reputable sources were available instead.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all staff working at the service. All vetting disclosures were dated within the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member.

(4) All adults working directly with children held the required 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) On the day of the inspection there were 18 pre-school children and 3 adults on the premises for the sessional service. There were 6 preschool children and 2 staff available in the afternoon for the part time service. The adult child ratio was correct overall in the facility.

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 6 children's records were viewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these children.

- (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

BASIC NEEDS:

The service ensured that each child's learning and development was facilitated within the daily life of the service.

A healthy eating policy was in place and children brought a healthy snack each day with them to the preschool.

Children's drinks were stored in the door of the fridge in the preschool room and were accessible to the children at all times. Drinks were taken outside to the play area when children were outdoors.

All children were toilet trained and were independently using the bathroom facilities. Help was offered if required.

Nappy changing facilities were available if needed. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were accessible in the bathrooms to ensure hygienic washing of hands.

A large adult couch with soft cushions was located in the library corner of the room. This provided the children with a rest space if they needed quiet time away from the general play areas. Where children presented with

additional needs, individual care plans were developed. Individual goals and progress reports were documented and evidence of regular communication with parents and other professionals were noted in writing. Children had daily access to a sensory garden containing lots of natural play materials. Opportunities to run, climb, crawl and balance were available in this space, with low level climbing frames, tunnels, slides, planting areas and garden seats all accessible to the children. Children also had access to the school playground where opportunities for ball sports was available.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The indoor environment was well laid out with a good range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences for the children. Low level tables and chairs provided a space for the children for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes. Play equipment and materials were displayed on open low-level shelving and were grouped to provide specific interest spaces. Some of the areas included a construction area, a home corner equipped with a play kitchen, food props, dolls and prams, an imagination play area with dress up clothes, a rest /relaxation reading corner with a soft couch located next to a book stand, an art/craft area and a sensorial and messy play area. Childrens family photographs and educational posters were displayed on the walls of the room at children's eye level.

The outdoor areas of the service offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration. The garden was designed from natural materials and encouraged the children to learn about safe risk, to complete obstacles, to improve balance and co-ordination and to explore nature through planting and gardening.

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:

The service ensured that the safety of the children was paramount, and the facility was regularly checked to ensure proper safety standards were maintained both internally and externally.

On arrival to the service, the door to the pre-school premises was secured. This prevented any unauthorised entry to the school and any unsupervised exit of children from the service. All outdoor play areas were safely secured and were surrounded by high-level steel fencing. Children were supervised at all times while outside.

Infection Control:

A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in all areas of the service. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels ensured regular hygienic washing of hands.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The preschool services insurance certificate was viewed on the day of inspection. The policy commenced on the 28th of March 2024 and will be due for renewal on the 27th of March 2025. The policy covered a maximum of 22 children for part time childcare services.

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) The premises appeared to be sound and stable structure. There were no observable indications of defects in the structure of the premises.
- (b) The premises was safe and secure. All exit doors were secured to prevent children leaving the facility unsupervised. All fire exits were unobstructed allowing for safe evacuation of the premises if needed.
- (c) There was adequate lighting and ventilation in all areas of the premises.
- (d) All areas were clean, well maintained and all play materials and equipment were in a proper state of repair.
- (e) There were adequate sanitary facilities provided suitable for the needs of the children attending.