

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK133		
Name of Service:	Next Step Playschool		
Address of Service:	Manister National School, Manister, Croom, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V35 EK54		
Name of Registered Provider:	Pauline Burke		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	09/11/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry St., 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

Next Step Playschool is a sessional pre-school service located in a classroom on the grounds of Manister Primary School in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 12.00 md. It has a maximum capacity to accommodate 20 children. There were 11 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 the primary school playground and garden areas.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work at the service. A designated person in charge has been appointed to manage the service. There are 2 additional adults working at the facility. Each adult at the service holds a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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
- (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.

(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) On the day of the inspection the manager of the service was the designated person in charge. A person to deputise in her absence was available.

(b) The manager of the service was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were 2 written references from past employers available in respect of the designated person in charge. There was 1 written reference from a past employer available for a second staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as a previous school or college were provided.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of all adults who work at the service.

(d) Not applicable to this service as none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) All staff hold an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) There was one staff present who had 1 reference on file. A second reference was required but not available.

There was a second staff member who had no written references on file.

(3) All references were not in place prior to each staff having access to children at the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) All required references that were outstanding at the time of the inspection have been received. All references have been validated.

(3) All references will be submitted and checked prior to any person having access to children in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the required references were submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed.

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 service operates a morning sessional service from 9am to 12 midday. There were 3 adults present with 11 preschool children. The adult child ratio was correct.

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) The enrolment forms for the 13 children registered to attend the service were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service was recorded on 5 of the 13 forms.
- (c) Provision to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service was available on all forms.
- (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. Information also on each child's likes and dislikes around foods, toys and activities was noted on the registration forms.

- (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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There were 8 registration forms where the date the child first attended the service was not completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) The start date on which each child commenced in the service has been added to all registration forms.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider stated in her reply that all registration forms will be checked for accuracy before a child begins in the service or within 10 days of starting at the service.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 15 has been adequately addressed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
 - (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
 - (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
 - (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
 - (e) The facilities available.
 - (f) The opening hours and fees.
 - (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
 - (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
 - (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (i) Details of the staff rosters had not been completed on the day of the inspection or on any of the 3 previous days of that week beginning Monday the 6th of November 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff rosters are now completed on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Rosters will be checked regularly to ensure they are accurate at all times.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 16 has been adequately addressed.

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).

Non-Compliance Information

Evidence was not available to demonstrate that the information referred to in Regulation 16(1), subparagraphs (a) to (g) was provided to parents or guardians of a child proposing to attend the service. This information was documented in the policy folder of the service but was not accessible to the parents.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Pictures of staff along with details of their qualifications and their roles within the room are now being displayed for parents and visitors to see.

Supporting documentation submitted

Prior to the start of each school year the display of staff details will be updated as required.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 17 has been adequately addressed.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

Health eating was promoted, and parents provided children with a healthy snack each day for their break time. Fruit, watermelon, ham and cheese sandwiches, crackers, rice cakes, and yogurts were observed in the children's lunches boxes. Sanitary accommodation was available next to the preschool room. Wash hand basins with hot water, soap and paper hand towels were located in the preschool room and children were observed regularly washing their hands during the session. Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their level of independence such as putting on their coats and scarfs and hats when getting ready for home time. Childrens personal belongings were stored on clearly labelled coat hooks with each child's photograph and name placed over their individual hook. To encourage each child's sense of belonging a family wall was created with pictures of each child's family displayed. Children had access to the school playground each morning at the service for outdoor play time. Outdoor raingear and wellingtons were available for all children to ensure that they get to spend time outdoors regardless of weather conditions. A verbal exchange of information with parents took place at collection time each day and news about the child's engagement and the activities they enjoyed were discussed.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operates from 1 large preschool room, with bathroom facilities accessible, adjacent to the room. The centre of the room was occupied with low level tables and chairs which the children used for dining at break time and for tabletop activities throughout the morning. Around the perimeter walls of the room, low level open shelving provided storage for lots of play equipment. A home corner with kitchen toys, dolls, prams and dress up clothes provided space for imaginative play.

Lots of art and craft materials were available to the children and lots of artwork the children had completed was displayed at the service. Sand and water trays provided opportunities for sensorial and messy play. Children had access to a variety of materials and equipment which were rotated to suit the changing abilities and interests of the children.

The outdoor areas of the service offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration. The garden area to the side of the playground space was designed to encourage children to learn about safe risk, to complete obstacles, to improve balance and co-ordination. The large school yard provided space for children to run, exercise and play ball games.

Non-Compliance Information

The rest area in the preschool room had 1 cushion and 1 floor mat. To promote comfort and a relaxation space for the children, more soft furnishings are required in this area of the room to ensure children have an area in the service to rest when and if needed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Pillows and soft seating have been reintroduced to the rest area and more soft furnishings have been purchased to enhance the rest area.

Supporting documentation submitted

The staff at the service will ensure soft furnishings are accessible each day in the rest space of the room.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire extinguishers and the smoke alarms in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A written record was available of fire drills that took place in the September and in October 2023. These records were inaccurate as both dates were on Saturdays when the service was closed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire drills are now carried out on a monthly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Records of fire drills are checked as part of a monthly safety checklist.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

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 22 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2023 and is due to expired on the 27th of March 2024.