

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LK159

Name of Service: St. Mary's Pre School

Address of Service: St. Mary's National School, Bishop Street, Limerick.

Eircode: V94T6Y0

Name of Registered Provider: Laura Firth

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 11/06/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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

Saint Marys Preschool is a registered sessional service located in Limerick city. Operational hours are Monday to Friday 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs for 38 weeks of the year with a maximum of 22 children attending. The service operates from two rooms within the national school. The service has access to an outdoor play area located at the rear of the service. It has suitable sanitary facilities for both adults and children.

Staffing

Four staff are employed in the service with each staff member having childcare qualifications.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Childcare 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 9,11,15,19,24,25,26 and 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 registered provider, 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

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise.
 - (b) At all times the designated person in charge or the named deputy person was on the premises.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that staff were suitable and competent by consideration of the following
 - (a) References were available for staff from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.
 - (b) References were available from reputable sources in the case of a person who had no past employers.
 - (c) Vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all staff.
 - (d) Police vetting from police authorities in other states was not required as no person had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) All staff working directly with the children had childcare qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

Compliance Information

(3) At all times during the period of the inspection the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of the inspection there were 4 staff working with and supervising 17 preschool children.

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 six registration forms for preschool children attending the service were examined and each contained the following particulars:

(1) (a) –(i).

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) BASIC NEEDS

Lunch/snacks were supplied by a company in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. Food observed on the day of the inspection included sandwiches, fruit and bottles of water. Drinking water was also available in the service throughout the session if a child needed a drink.

The children and staff sat together around the tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food.

Children went to the toilet independently with assistance given to those who needed it. They were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap.

A couch was available in the room where children could rest and relax as desired throughout the morning.

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within the pre-school room and there was a sufficient supply of play equipment available to support play.

A drumming class took place in the service on the morning of the inspection which all the group of children participated in. Two sessions took place, and the group were divided in to two groups. This supported childrens sense of rhythm and sound and the children actively participated and enjoyed the session.

The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour.

Children were observed playing with chalk on blackboards which supported their mark making skills.

Children were allowed make their own choices and had their choices respected as they were asked if they wanted to go outdoors to play.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

This sessional service was operated from two rooms, with the sanitary accommodation area nearby and an outdoor play area at the rear of the facility.

Adequate and varied play equipment suited to the age and stage of development of the child was available in the service and in the outdoor play area.

The playroom was spacious and bright. Defined interest areas included a reading area, construction area, home corner, are easel with paints, puzzles, manipulative play area, tabletop area, and small world area.

Children played outdoors in the fresh air on the day.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection each child attending the service was checked in and out by the registered provider and a record of each child's attendance was maintained on a daily basis and was available and accessible at all times.

(3)(a) No persons other than the following could enter the premises without being approved by the registered provider:

(i) A preschool child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting a preschool child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) Unpaid worker.

(b) A daily visitors record of any other persons entering the service was in place.

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) Two staff had completed up to date training in first aid for children (First Aid Responder) and a staff member with this training was available to children at all times during the operation of the service.
- (2) A suitably equipped first aid box for children-
- (a) Was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.
 - (b) Was available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

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) A record in writing was kept of fire drills that took place in the premises. The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises were in date and serviced annually. The smoke alarm system was serviced in June 2024.
- (4) The fire drill procedure was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available for the number of children who attended and had an expiry date 27/03/2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (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

The registered provider had ensured that the premises was;

- (b) The entrance was secured to prevent a child exiting and to prevent unauthorised access.
- (c) Natural lighting was supplemented by artificial lighting. Heating was not required on the day. Openable windows allowed the room to be ventilated.
- (d) Cleaning checklists were available and signed.
- (e) Four toilets and four wash hand basins were available with hot and cold running water.