

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LK165
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Stepping Stones Pre School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Bruree Rockhill Community Childcare Ltd., Main Street, Bruree, Co. Limerick
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V35 E928
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Bernie O'Keeffe
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	25/09/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	10	PM	3
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate , Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Browne
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This community service was first established in 2010. It operates a sessional service from 08:50 to 11:50 hours, and a part time from 09:00 to 14:00, and pm hours 12:00 to 15:00 Monday – Friday, from the childcare centre of the sports complex which opened in 2017.

The children have access to a large, designated playroom, sanitary accommodation for the adults and children and an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

A school aged service is available to the children from the local primary

### Staffing

The person in charge and 2 adults were present on the day of inspection working directly with the children. These staff have an appropriate childcare qualification.

An additional staff was present to assist in the event of an emergency.

The registered provider does not work in 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 8, 9, 11, 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 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) The registered provider did not notify Tusla, early years registration office in writing that there had been a change in circumstances in relation to the registered provider and the person in charge in the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) A change of circumstances was submitted to the registration office to register the details of the registered provider and the person in charge. Approval was received for the change in the person in charge. However the service is awaiting approval from the registration office for the change in the registered provider.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

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

### Summary Comment

#### Point (1)

This regulatory requirement has only been partially met.

Approval for the change in circumstances for the registered provider remains outstanding. This will be reviewed on the next 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) There was a named person in charge on the day of the inspection. There was a second person available to deputise if needed.

(b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived at the service.

(2)(a)(b) Two written and verified references from past employers and other sources were available for all the staff members employed at the service.

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

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

(4) The three staff working with the children 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.*

*(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

(2) There were 3 staff working directly with 10 preschool children in the sessional group and 3 staff in the afternoon working with 3 preschool children availing of the part time service.

This was compliant with the recommended adult/child ratios.

There was one additional staff available to assist 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 healthy eating policy for the service detailed the requirements for parents to supply healthy snacks for their children. Snacks observed on the day of the inspection included sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yogurt. Staff were observed to clean table before snacks were eaten. The staff sat at the table with the children. Drinking water was available throughout the session if a child needed a drink. The children sat together around the tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food.

Children were observed going to the toilet on their own and assistance was given to those who needed it. The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting, outdoor play and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels. A nappy changing facility was available if required.

Children moved freely indoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. A rest area was developed in the room where children could sit and relax in. The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the indoor and outdoor environment.

The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The staff interactions with the children were positive and caring. Children were encouraged and listened to by the staff. The staff operated in partnership with parents by sharing individual records for each child which detailed their progress. Children played outdoors on the day on inspection which supported their gross motor development and allowed greater social interaction as a group.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

The service provided a range of developmentally appropriate experiences for the children attending. The range of play materials and equipment offered stimulation to all the senses. Materials used included sensory, cause and effect, symbolic and imaginative play supported all areas of development. Materials and equipment were freely available to the children when needed for example crayons, paper, and paint were available throughout the session, art work was displayed and items of interest were at the child's eye level on low level shelving.

There were areas of interest such as the home corner, library and rest area, sand play, musical instruments, jigsaws shelf and construction area evident in the service.

The outdoor area was an extension of indoor area and opportunities to be outside as often as possible was encouraged throughout the morning. The equipment and materials in the outdoor area supported children's play, gross motor movement and provided opportunities exclusive to outdoor play. The children were observed at play on the climbing frame, in the sand and water area and on the ride on toys.

## 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Fire Safety:

1. The area in route to the emergency fire exit door was used as a storage area for play and work equipment including cleaning equipment. This posed a potential fire safety obstruction.
2. Fire drills were not practised every month. The records indicated that fire drills took place in January and May of 2023. This posed a risk to both the staff and children in the event of a fire emergency.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Fire Safety:

1. The area in route to the emergency fire exit door is now clear and free from play equipment and materials. Additional storage space area was identified for the play and work equipment including the cleaning equipment.
2. A fire drills was practised in October by the staff and children present in the service. The fire drills will be practised every month.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

No

#### Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliances identified. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

### 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) Each child attending the service was recorded on the attendance record with details of their time of arrival and time of exit.

(3) The person in charge ensured that no other person other than the following can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

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

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker.

#### Non-Compliance Information

A daily record in writing did not include the following:

(1)

1. The name of the employee who's responsible for checking the children in and out of the service.

(3)(b)

2. A record of visitors who enter the premises.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

**Corrective and Preventive Action:**

(1)  
1.A daily record is now maintained of the employee who's responsible for checking the arrival and departure times of the preschool children.

(3)(b)  
2.A visitors book is now in place for all persons entering the premises.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

No

**Summary Comment**

The actions as stated by the registered provider will address the non-compliances identified. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

**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 were 4 staff present on the day of the inspection who had completed first aid responder training and their certificates were in date.

(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 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)

The last recorded fire drill took place in May 2023.

(b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in January 2023, and a record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was no maintenance record to indicate when the smoke alarm system was serviced. This must be serviced on an annual basis.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action:**

(1)(b)

The service has contacted a reputable company to service the smoke alarm system and are now waiting for a service date.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No

### Summary Comment

Point (1)(b) remains outstanding as no evidence has been submitted to confirm that the smoke alarm system was serviced.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

### 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 sessional and part time service to operate.