

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH008				
Name of Service:	Athboy Community Childcare				
Address of Service:	Townspark, Athboy, Co. Meath				
Eircode:	C15 K658				
Name of Registered Provider:	Pearse Ferguson				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time				
Date of Inspection:	25/04/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>41</td> <td>PM</td> <td>30</td> </tr> </table>	AM	41	PM	30
AM	41	PM	30		

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co Meath.
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham & D Murray
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Athboy Community Childcare is located in a town in rural county Meath and provides a full day care /part time service to children from 0 to 6 years. The service is open Monday to Friday from 07.30 to 18.30. Eligible children avail of the state funded Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 3 hours per day over 38 weeks of the year within part- or fulltime attendance. The service operates in a 2-storey purpose-built building containing four rooms on the ground floor, catering for pre-school children, namely the Baby Room, the Toddler Room (morning), the Toddler Room (full day care), and the Pre-School Room. The maximum number the service can accommodate is 49 preschool children. The fifth room caters for school aged children from 3pm. Two school aged room are also available upstairs with a kitchen, sanitary facilities (nappy changing area), two cot rooms available downstairs. Additionally, the outdoor play area is located to the back of the pre-school with adequate parking available to the front of the pre-school.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection the assistant manager, 17 childcare staff (two of whom work a split shift) and a cook were present.

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.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the assistant manager, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed there were two new staff employed since the last inspection in 2022, both files were reviewed at this inspection.
- (a) Two written and validated references were from a past employers.
 - (b) Two written and validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for two staff members in the service.

(d) Police vetting was not required as neither staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) One childcare staff member held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The second staff member did not require a childcare qualification as they were not working directly with the children.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of staff was present at all times throughout the inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.

The rooms were as follows:

Baby room: 5 babies aged between 8 months and 16 months being cared for by 2 adults.

Small Toddlers room: 7 children ranging in age from 1 year to 2 years (4 children attending the service on a full day care basis and 3 children attending the service on a part-time basis) being cared for by 2 adults.

Big Toddlers Room: 11 children ranging in age from 2 to 3 years, (9 attending the service on a full day care basis and 2 children attending on a part-time basis) being cared for by 4 adults.

3-6 Room: 18 children ranging in age from 3 years to 6 years, (9 children attending the sessional service with 9 availing of full day care) being cared for by 4 adults.

2 O Clock room: not in use for preschool children in the morning and used by school aged in the afternoon.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster, the manager ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times

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:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. Adequate, suitable, nutritious, and varied food and drink was observed to be available for each pre-school child attending the service. Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack and meal without being rushed.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected. Toileting and nappy changing were carried out in a sensitive manner. Each child has access to a change of clothes if needed.
- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence. Regular hand washing was observed by the children. There were child friendly visual aids to support the children with effective hand washing in the service.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement in the pre-school rooms in use.

- Sleep facilities were available next to the baby and toddler rooms on the ground floor. There was an adequate supply of cots available to facilitate sleep on demand for all children. Low level beds were used for the older children. Children were monitored while sleeping with all checks documented at 10 minutes intervals on a sleep log.

Supporting Relationships around the Children:

- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met as each of the care rooms were provided with a rest area consisting of soft matting and cushions. The children were able to access the rest area as they chose for play or quiet time.
- Staff members stated that the theme of the week was "Spring" with art works displayed to reflect these themes in the care rooms. The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs. The children showed confidence around the staff members and an eagerness to engage with them in conversations and play. The children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Two cot rooms were available one with 6 cots in the Baby room and the second with 7 cots in the Big Toddler room which the Small Toddler room share for the children under 2 years who required sleep. The Big Toddler room also used stackable beds for the children over 2 years of age. Within the care rooms there were soft furnishings, mats, and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.
- (3)(a) There was a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to the rear of the premises. The area was divided into 3 areas using fencing. The surface areas consisted of soft absorbent matting and an all-weather surface.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The rooms were designated according to the age group of the children using them: baby room, two toddler rooms and pre-school room.

- The playrooms were laid out with uncluttered, clear floor spaces for the children to play safely.
- The opportunity for different types of play and learning were available and accessible in all the rooms.

The outdoor area was divided into 3 areas:

- The large area was for the older children consisted of an activity unit with a slide, goal posts, play house, ride on toys, counting stand and a stationary unit with a climbing wall.
- The outdoor play area adjacent to the Baby room had a mud kitchen, toy cars, ride on toys and a small slide.
- The outdoor play area for the Small Toddlers room had digging area, planting boxes, ride and push along toys and a wooden play hut.

An additional area with a poly tunnel was available to the children for planting and growing flowers and vegetables.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy with a weekly menu available. The food was prepared and cooked freshly on the premises on a daily basis by a designated cook. The food provided by the service was nutritious, varied, appropriate for the age of the children and adequate for the length of time the children were in attendance in the service. Extra helpings were provided to the children on request. The children in the Baby room; the Big Toddler room and Preschool room ate their meals in the dining room. The children attending the Baby room were served their meals in highchairs and were supported and encouraged to feed themselves. Drinks were always available to the children in the all-pre-school rooms.

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 entrance to the service has a lobby area and within this area is the entrance door to the pre-school premises which was secured with an electronic keypad security system.
- Safe storage was available for the cleaning agents and equipment used in the service.
- The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children, adults, and visitors to the service.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured.

Infection Control:

- A supply of cleaning agents stored out of reach of children were available in the service.
- Playrooms, the sleep room, communal areas and sanitary areas were adequately ventilated by mechanical ventilation and by natural forms of opening doors and windows.
- There was liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing for children and adults. Paper towels were provided in the dispensers in all the sanitary areas used by the children and adults to facilitate hygienic hand drying.
- There was 2 designated nappy changing rooms available and nappy changing procedures were carried out in an appropriate manner.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

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) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

(3)(a) All persons are approved by an employee prior to entry to the pre-school.

(b) Visitors are announced and approved by an authorised staff member on arrival, the visitors' details are entered into the visitors' book.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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) Records are available to show that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill was on 04/04/2023
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises. The firefighting equipment were serviced on the day of inspection 25/04/2023. The smoke alarms were last serviced on the 03/03/2023.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.