

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH039		
Name of Service:	Cushenstown Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Curraghtown, Meadesbrook, Ashbourne, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	A84 XW83		
Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Joyce		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	14/05/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM 0
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray		
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

Cushinstown Preschool was established in 2000 as a privately owned preschool service. The service offers sessional preschool care and education to children aged from 2 to 6 years through an emerging play-based curriculum. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 09:15 am to 12:15 pm Monday to Friday. The service is purpose-built adjacent to the registered providers home and consists of 1 care room, small kitchen area and sanitary facilities. Three outdoor spaces were available on the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs 2 childcare staff members. On the day of the inspection the registered provider was present with 1 staff member.

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 wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff member 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.*

(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) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) (a)&(b) Six validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the 3 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdictions for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) The 3 childcare staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.*
- (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

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

(3) On the day of inspection there were 2 adults providing care and education to 17 children ranging in age from 3 to 6 years.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Throughout the session children had the opportunity to move about freely and explore their environment. Children were given choices as to the area and equipment they wanted to play with. Children were observed independently selecting play materials, enjoying meaningful sustained play and replacing the materials back on the shelves when finished. The themes of the week was "Super Heroes" with the children having the choice to dressed in costumes to reflect this theme.
- Staff members were observed encouraging the children to become independent and self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, hand washing, caring for their belongings and tidying away after activities and play.
- The children brought their own healthy snack from home which they had at 11am. The staff members provided help when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraced outdoor play and learning. The early morning was wet however the staff were hoping to bring the children outside before home time.
- Transitions were handled smoothly with staff giving the children ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials.
- Staff were observed to comfort children who were upset and interactions were warm and engaging.
- The children showed confidence around the staff members and sought out staff members for comfort, praise and reassurance.

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-

(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.

(2) A registered provider-

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Mats were available for children to take a break from activities and rest if needed.

(2)(b) The service had 3 outdoor space which were secured by fencing, walls and all had secured gates. An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises which had an artificial soft tile surface. There was a paving area adjacent to the door of the service which was used for ride on toys. A large grass area which included a wooded area promoted challenging gross motor play.

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

- Materials and equipment were available on low level shelving in the care room. Children were observed to access the materials independently. The care room was well resourced and the following play materials and equipment were available to the children: a well-resourced home area with a range of equipment to enable the children to extend their play. A large play farm on a raised platform with a variety of materials for the children to use, dress up costumes, wooden puzzles and train set, sand table, dolls area, construction area, arts and crafts materials, a selection of materials for tabletop activities in addition to a wide variety of books.
- Equipment in the outdoor areas included 2 play houses, a wall mounted activity board, a selection of ride on toys, a large wooden tractor with steps available to access the cab in addition to a slide, sunken sand pit, a well-resourced mud kitchen, balance boards, planting areas, wooden huts, swings, a water wall and a wooden playhouse which also stored additional equipment.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service and the outdoor spaces were secured. These safety measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Warm running water was available in the children’s sanitary area, along with a supply of liquid soap and hand paper towel for effective hand washing.
- Pedal bins were in use throughout the service.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules available.
- A fridge was available for the refrigeration of perishable items in the children’s lunch boxes.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.

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 onsite 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) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 23/04/2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced on the 24/10/2023. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 25/08/2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 22 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/11/2023 to the 27/11/2024.