

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH192		
Name of Service:	The Grove Highscope Playschool		
Address of Service:	Ongenstown, Boyerstown, Navan, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 D36X		
Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Mallon		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	12/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath C15 CP23		
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham		
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

The Grove Highscope Playgroup Early Years' Service is established since 1996, located within the community in a rural area in Co Meath. The service provides a sessional preschool education service for children from 2 years 8 months to 5 years and participates in the Early childhood care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for up to 20 preschool children and operates from 09.00am to 12.00hrs each weekday. The service is to the rear of the registered providers own home with a separate entrance to the preschool. The outdoor area is to the side and back of the service

Staffing

The registered provider and three staff members are employed in the service, one staff provides AIM support.

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 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 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) Four staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted.
- (a) & (b) Eight validated written references were available for the staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for three staff members as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) The staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service. Three staff members cared for 16 preschool children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct;
- Three adults (one staff providing AIM support) cared for 16 children aged between 3 years and 4 years 11 months.

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

Basic Needs of the Children:

- Snack time was utilised as a social occasion, during which all the children sat, ate and chatted together. Staff also sat with the children at snack time
- Staff showed affection, love and compassion physically and emotionally through relationships that were very respectful and positive.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- The children's sense of identity and belonging was nurtured effectively by the many photographic displays of the children and their families throughout the setting. Family members were very actively engaged in the daily life of the preschool and it was clearly evident how well the staff knew the families. At drop-off and pick-up times, holiday stories were exchanged.
- The indoor and outdoor environments were inviting and inspiring and offered high play value. They were purposefully structured and organised to support the children's desire to explore
- Staff engaged the children in two-way, reciprocal communication throughout the day. The balance between listening and speaking was very good and the children were very actively encouraged to express their views, emotions and thinking in numerous ways. Songs, rhymes and activity games were enjoyed by the children throughout the session, and they explored high-quality books individually or interactively.
- All staff members demonstrated thoughtfulness, self-awareness and reflection in their practice.
- The leader was a very good role model for the staff and together with the dedicated staff team she promoted high standards and a clear vision for the work of the setting.

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 indoor and outdoor environments were inviting and inspiring and offered high play value. They were purposefully structured and organised to support the children’s desire to explore. On the day of the inspection the children used the outdoor area, equipment available included sit on toys, mud kitchen with covered area overhead, climbing frame and swings, basketball hoop and sand box.

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 was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- 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 observed:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained on a daily basis.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for four staff members. However, three staff members vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Updated Garda Clearance has been obtained for all outstanding staff members, dated 20/11/2024. The garda clearance certificates will be renewed within the three-year timeframe going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted evidence of renewed garda vetting's for the staff members.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider addresses the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

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.

Compliance Information

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

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 the 7/10/24.
- (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 09/11/2023. The smoke alarms were last serviced on 04/08/24.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

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 for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2024 to the 27th March 2025.