

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015MN040 | | |
| Name of Service: | Magherarney Community Childcare Services Ltd | | |
| Address of Service: | C/O Scoil Mhuire, Magherarney, Smithborough, Co. Monaghan | | |
| Eircode: | H18 K190 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Ciaran Rooney | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 07/11/2024 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 9 | PM - |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84 | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | S Mc Kenna | | |
| 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

Magherarney Community Childcare Services Ltd. is a not-for-profit community childcare provider. The preschool service is located within Scoil Mhuire national school in Smithborough, Co. Monaghan. It is registered to provide sessional care to preschool children aged 2-6 years and can accommodate 20 children. The Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme operates from 9.00am – 12.00pm. School aged care is provided. The national school's outdoor area is used by the preschool children at designated times. Set down and parking facilities are available outside the premises.

Staffing

The service employs 3 adults. All 3 adults were present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider is not service based.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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 in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that at all times when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person to deputise were on the premises.
- (2) The staff files for 3 adults were reviewed.
- (a) (b) Two written and validated references from past employers, and or reputable sources in the absence of past employments were on file for 3 adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 3 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 3 adults, demonstrated that no adults had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 3 adults employed to work with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above 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.

(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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

Three adults cared for nine children aged 2 years 11 months to 4 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

(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

The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that the children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic Needs

- Children take in their own snack and drinks from home. Food observed to be eaten on the day included sandwiches, rice cakes, wraps, waffles, yogurts and chopped fruits.
- The sanitary area is located off the hallway outside the preschool room. Children were observed to be supervised while using the toilet and supports provided by the adults if required.
- The children were observed to dress appropriately for outdoor play on the day of the inspection. Aprons were available for messy play activities.
- An area of rest was provided within the preschool room should a child require a rest; the area had a soft floor mat with a soft sofa for children to sit and relax.
- The atmosphere in the preschool room was warm and inviting. The children were observed to be engaged in play and activities throughout the inspection. The children’s choice of play was observed throughout free play time.

Supporting Relationships

- The children were observed to engage well with their peers. The children took part in song and rhyme times with the adults, and discussed what hibernation is, and talked about what was going to happen next in their daily routine. Small disagreements observed were addressed promptly by the adults, with solutions provided in agreement with the children.
- The adults were observed to use words of positive encouragement during the preschool routine. Conversations about the colour of children and adults eyes, and children’s new shoes were observed. Children’s choices were respected, which was demonstrated during song time where a child requested for a particular autumn song to be sang. The child displayed signs of happiness when the song was sung.
- The children appeared familiar with their routine and were aware of what comes next. After clean up time the children were observed to go to the book corner and chat with their friends while the adults prepared for the next activity. A child’s birthday was celebrated on the day of inspection with excitement displayed by the children about celebrating this occasion with “a birthday party”.
- The staff team were observed to work well with one another. Transitions were observed to be smooth, with gentle and encouraging directions given to children where required. A keyworker system is in place.

- Communication with parents is through a digital application, in person at arrival and collection, and through email where required.

Physical and Material Environment

- The indoor play environment was laid out to include areas such as home corner, dress up, shop play, soft play area, a table top section, chalkboard, jigsaw area, a creative area, playdough area, sand play and a reading area with books. The room was bright and spacious. The children were observed to move between the various interest areas throughout the preschool session.
- The children’s creative art work to include Halloween, autumn wreaths and autumn trees were on display alongside a birthday chart, a decorated family tree with family photos and a “how are you feeling” emotions board.
- The outdoor areas available to the preschool children included a section of the national school playground, and access to a sensory garden. The school playground was secured by walls, fencing and gates. Tarmac was the ground surface with some painted games on the surface. The children were observed to play with ride on trucks, dolls and prams, tractor and trailer, footballs and playing a roll the dice game and counting steps in the outdoor area. The sensory area to the rear of the premises was enclosed by fencing and had a ground surface of bark and gravel. Wall mounted mirrors, chalkboards, painted tyres and large planting areas were available.

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:

- A visitor log was maintained in the service. The inspector was requested to sign in upon arrival.
- The children were observed to be adequately supervised both indoors and outdoors on the day of the inspection.
- Materials and equipment available to the preschool children were observed in good repair.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Fire exits remained unobstructed during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Hand soap, paper towels and bins were provided for handwashing purposes.
- Hand washing was observed in practise, following use of the toilet and prior to snack times.

- Tables were observed to be cleaned after messy play activities and before snack times.
- The children's snacks taken in from home, were stored in the fridge.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and up to date.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Upon the inspectors arrival the main entrance door to the preschool room was not secured to prevent unauthorised access to the premises. It is acknowledged that once brought to the attention of the person in charge, the door was locked.
2. Three of the six blind cords in the preschool room were not adequately secured, therefore posing a risk of injury to a child.
3. The warm water in the children's sanitary areas was in excess of 43°C. This poses a risk of injury to a child.
4. A spray bottle of cleaning solution in the sanitary area, was stored on a low-level shelf, accessible to the children. This poses a risk of injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The keys have been added to a wall hook, high up out of the reach of children. Following the children's arrival and collection times the door is locked promptly by staff. Checks have been inserted on the updated daily hazard checklist. To note the service will be moving premises soon and propose to fit magnetic locks at the entrance.
2. Hooks have been added to the wall to be able to hook up the cords out of reach of the children. Check inserted on daily hazard checklist.
3. Water temperature has been adjusted and checked with the temperature probe. Water temperature check has been added to the daily hazard checklist to ensure that the water does not exceed 43°C.
4. The antibacterial spray is stored under the counter of the nappy changing area, with a safety lock on the door. The storage box with all the nappy changing equipment including the antibacterial spray is now left in the cupboard. Check inserted on daily hazard checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of an updated daily hazard checklist & photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 23.

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) Following review of staff files, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times. All three staff held in date FAR training.

(2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises, stored in an accessible and conspicuous location, out of the reach of children.

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

(a) A record of fire drills that take place was available, with the most recent dated fire drill in November 2024.

(b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated April 2024, and the maintenance of the smoke alarms dated March 2024.

(4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on the preschool wall, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 20 pre-school children attending the service on a sessional basis. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27 March 2025.