

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN050
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Name of Service:	St. Oliver Plunkett's Community Preschool
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Address of Service:	Loughmourne, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A75 PY66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Seamus Conlon
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Rd Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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.
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Description of service

St. Oliver Plunketts Community Preschool has been operating as a community run childcare service since 2010. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged from 2 - 6 years of age. The service is open from 08:00 to 18:00 each weekday and caters for a maximum of 50 children. The service operates from prefabricated buildings on the grounds of the local primary school in the rural area of Loughmoure Castleblayney Co. Monaghan. The service currently has 2 care rooms in operation the Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms, there are also sanitary accommodations, nappy changing facilities, a kitchen and an office.

Staffing

There were 6 staff employed in the service all of whom worked directly with the children.

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 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

There were 6 staff files presented for inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for the 6 members of staff.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available for all 6 staff members in the service. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes 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) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, international police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the 6 members of staff, who worked directly with the pre-school children had a minimum Level 5 childcare qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) From the documentary evidence available for inspection one of the new staff members had commenced working in the service prior to Garda Vetting being obtained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) Employees will not be permitted to commence employment prior to Garda vetting and all documents being obtained and updated as per Staff File check list.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response, and the non-compliance has been addressed.

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.

(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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service in the Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms.

(2) When the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there were 2 rooms in operation the Junior and Senior Room.

The following adult: child ratios were observed:

- Two staff in Junior Preschool Room 1 with 12 children aged 3 years.
- Three staff in the Senior Preschool Room with 21 children aged 3 - 4 years.
- At 12:15 both rooms joined together in the Senior Room for the remainder of the day and there were 14 children with 3 staff.

(8) On review of documentation the registered provider ensured that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) A Curriculum Vitae specifying qualifications and experience was not available for inspection for 3 staff members.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A Curriculum Vitae has been sought from each relevant employee together with an allocated timeframe and submitted to Management.

A Curriculum Vitae requirement has been added to Staff Files Form which must be all present prior to commencement of employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

CV X 3 Submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and documentation has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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,

Compliance Information

There were 2 rooms in operation on the day of inspection namely the Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children’s learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic needs:

- In both rooms the children were observed to move freely in the care rooms and had a change of environment to go for a walk in the adjoining school playground. The children were dressed appropriately to go outside.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required. Gentle handwashing reminders were also given to the children in the various rooms after toileting, outdoor play and before meals.
- Attention was given to personal care such as nose blowing and there were “snuffle stations” in the rooms.
- Morning snacks were provided by the parents and stored appropriately in the fridge. Dinners for the children attending on a full day care basis were provided by an outside catering company and reheated by the service. The service provided additional snacks, and juice or water at snack and dinner time.

Supporting Relationships

- Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the staff and children in both the rooms for example when a child spilled their drink the staff responded with “*that’s ok that happens*”. The staff were observed down on the floor and at the tables with the children and to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner thereby ensuring minor behavioural issues did not escalate “ *we are nice to our friends*” and “*there is no need to push*”.
- Staff used a notice board and newsletter to communicate information to parents. The staff also reported that communication with parents is conducted verbally at collection and drop off.

Physical and Material Environment:

- Both care rooms were made up of 2 areas which were very well resourced for the numbers attending. There were defined interest areas, somewhere to relax in, toys and equipment to promote and enhance sensory play and to develop fine motor skills.

Programme of activities:

- There was evidence of short-term planning for the week and photographs on the parent’s notice board. A large floor book was also in use with the activities which were carried out. Scrapbooks with the children’s artwork were available and staff had commenced observation folders for each child which would be sent home at the end of term.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The children's drink cups were stored in their bags in the hall and therefore not freely accessible to them throughout the day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has created a space i.e. 'Drinks Station' within the classroom for the children to have access to a drink as they wish without having to ask permission.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of hydration stations.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate accepts the registered provider's response and supporting evidence. The non-compliance has been addressed.

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,

(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) There were cushions and a number of mats on the floor, a fold out foam mat and cushions in the Senior and Junior Rooms for the children to sit and rest in or read a book. There were also stackable day beds available should a child require to lie down or sleep.

(3)(a) The designated outdoor area was not in use on the day of inspection due to recent storm damage and requires repair work. The children could access the outdoor playground of the adjoining school to go for a walk.

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

The registered provider did not ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service as outlined below:

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was reviewed for all staff members and one of these 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'.
2. There were unprotected sharp corners on a number of shelving units in both rooms which included the white shelving, red topped shelving and brown units. This is a recurrent non-compliance and potential injury risk.
3. The CD player in the Junior room was unsecured and had a trailing electrical wire. This was accessible to the children and a health and safety risk.
4. There were keys in the doors of the staff room, cupboard storing the cleaning equipment and in the emergency fire exit door in the Junior Preschool Room. These were accessible to the preschool children and a health and safety risk.

Infection Control:

5. There was no hot water in the children's sanitary accommodation in the Senior Room or in the staff toilet. The children from this room were observed to wash their hands with the cold water. This is an infection control risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action:

General Safety:

1. The staff members Garda Vetting had been sought prior to commencement of employment and prior to inspection date and came through in a few days after inspection. The staff member had been employed previously in the service and we were using the previous Garda Vetting, however this was over 3 years old. All staff documents obtained will be updated as per Staff File check list.

2. Corner Protectors have been fitted to the relevant shelving. 'Furniture Safe with no Sharp Edges' added to Daily Risk Checklist.
3. The CD player has been removed from the area and stored safely away from the children.
No trailing cables or wires' added to the daily check list.
4. The keys are now hung on relevant hooks and the emergency door lock has been replaced with a 'thumb lock' in lieu of key.

This requirement has now been added to the Daily Risk Checklist.

Infection Control:

5. The plumber was contacted immediately after the inspection and rectified that evening.
This issue has been added to the Daily Risk Checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of Daily Care room daily risk assessment and copy of the updated Garda vetting and staff file checklist.

Infection Control:

Sanitary area checklist.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response has been reviewed in relation to non-compliances identified in Regulation 23. The responses and supporting information are accepted and the non-compliances have been addressed. These will be for review on the 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) The registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. Three FAR certificates were reviewed.
- (2)(a) and (b) A first aid box was available to the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) and (b) There were no eye pads in the first aid box.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)(a) and (b) Eye-pads have been purchased. A monthly checklist has been displayed beside the First Aid Bag.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of first aid box check list.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed and accepted the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. The non-compliance has been addressed.