

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO004
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Name of Service:	An Scoil Beag
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Address of Service:	No. 8 Woodpark Ave, Quay Road, Westport, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F28 EY10
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mairead Hastings
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

An Scoil Beag is a privately owned sessional service located in a residential housing estate in Westport, County Mayo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from two to six years of age between the hours of 08:30-11:30. The premises is a converted residential semi-detached house. There are two playrooms, one located on the ground floor and a second playroom located on the first floor of the building, an office and sanitary accommodation. Outdoor play areas are provided to the side and rear of the building including a sheltered enclosed outdoor area that is directly accessible from the ground floor playroom.

Staffing

There were four staff working in the service at the time of the inspection including the registered provider who provided relief cover when needed. One of the staff was employed through the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

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/ 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

(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

(2) The designated person in charge informed the inspector that there was one new staff member working in the service since the last focused inspection of the 6 October 2021. The vetting documentation for the other three staff members in the service had been checked on previous inspections and found to be compliant under the regulation.

The following information was available on file in the service for the new member of staff:

(a) and (b) Two written validated references.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required for the new staff member who had not lived outside of the State for periods of time longer than six months as an adult.

- (4)
- There was evidence available on file of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education for the staff new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with the children. The qualifications for the remaining staff had been reviewed on previous inspection and were found to meet the regulatory requirements.

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 worked directly with the children attending the service. There were 3 adults working directly with 19 children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service on the morning of the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio for a sessional service of one adult to each eleven children was adhered to with 3 adults working directly with 19 children during the inspection. 1 adult worked with 11 children in the downstairs playroom and 2 adults worked with 8 children in the upstairs playroom.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector and designated person in charge selected ten of the children's records for review across the children attending both playrooms. The required information was stored electronically. Each of the children's records was found to contain the information required under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available for inspection by the designated person in charge on request.

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;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The following information was available in the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of each staff member and unpaid worker.
- (b) Information on the type of service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to.
- (c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service.
- (d) The service's type of care or programme.
- (e) The facilities available in the service.

- (f) The service's hours of opening and fees.
 - (g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were available in electronic form.
 - (h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded on daily attendance sheets and also recorded electronically.
 - (i) Details of the staff daily working hours were recorded on attendance sheets.
 - (j) There was a record book to record any medication administered to children while attending the service to include signed parental consent. This information could also to be recorded by staff on an electronic system in the service.
 - (k) An accident/incident book was available to record details of any accident, injury or incident involving children attending the service and to be signed by staff.
- (3)
- The records were made available in the service to the inspector by the designated person in charge when requested to.

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 registered provider ensured that there was adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available to the children and staff on the premises. There was a wide range of toys and play equipment both indoors and outdoors to support the children’s development. The equipment was arranged and displayed at low levels to allow children to see the items to help them to choose activities that appealed to them.

The inspector was told by the designated person in charge that the children rotate use of the playrooms during sessions with younger children using the upstairs room on arrival to the service and swapping playrooms with the older children during the session. There was a range of small world play equipment in the upstairs room including a well-resourced play kitchen, pony and stable, dolls and accessories, and a dressing up area with clothing, wall mirror, dressing table and chair. Other play equipment in the room included construction and transport toys such as numerous plastic and wooden blocks and a wooden train set. A rest area had been created with soft seating beside a small book corner with age-appropriate books for children to look at.

The downstairs playroom also had a selection of books and numerous tabletop activities including Montessori equipment for example dressing frames, wooden counting spindles, knobbed cylinders and geometric shapes. Art supplies including paints and papers were stored on shelving downstairs and children were observed to play at an electronic white table with coloured magnets. Equipment to support messy play was readily available to children such as covered sand areas and utensils outdoors. Large plastic activity tables were set up with activities both indoors and outdoors. Examples of these were an “ice cream making station” with plastic ice cream cones to be filled with peatmoss and flowers set up outdoors, and a seabed themed activity table with blue coloured rice and seashells in the downstairs playroom.

The tables and chairs provided indoors and in the outdoor shelter were appropriate sizes for the children using them.

The outdoor space had been developed with an enclosed outdoor shelter accessible directly from the downstairs playroom. The shelter had a table and chairs for group activities and there was a storage system for waterproof overalls and wellington boots used by the children on rainy days. The service had a shed to store outdoor toys used to promote physical activity such as ride on toys and sports equipment that was used on the day to facilitate

the children’s “sports day”. Children played at a music wall that had been created in one area of the outdoor space during the 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) A certificate of completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with an expiry date of 1 March 2025 was available for one of the staff members present on the day of inspection.

(2)

- (a) An appropriately stocked first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location in the hallway.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were displayed in the entrance hallway with the last fire drill dated as having been undertaken on the 20 May 2024.
 - (b) Records of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were displayed in the entrance hallway. The smoke/fire alarm system was maintained on the 11 April 2024 and the firefighting equipment was maintained on the 30 August 2023 according to the records available.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were on display in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance for sessional service provision for a maximum of 22 children was displayed in the entrance hallway.