

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY057		
Name of Service:	Harbour Hill Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Cushcallow, Banagher, Birr, Co. Offaly		
Eircode:	R42 K171		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jackie Gleeson		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	12 January 2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

Established in 2012 the service operates as a sessional service catering for up to 22 children. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00 on a Monday to Friday basis for 38 weeks. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is attached to the home of the registered provider and provides two pre-school rooms. Outdoor play facilities are attached to the rear of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated on the outskirts of the village of Banagher, Co. Offaly.

Staffing

The registered provider, the designated person in charge and one staff member were present during the inspection. All employees were working directly with children and held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 inspections 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 co-operation of the registered provider, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT)

REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “)

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider and the designated person in charge were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider and the designated person in charge were present throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written references were available from either a past employer or a source other than a previous employer in respect of all staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of all staff members.

(d)

No staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2) (a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of staff.

(4)

Three staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)(b)

No staff member had signed a declaration on or before the 30th of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

No staff member present were working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.

(3)

There were sixteen children attending the service supervised directly by three adults.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

In a sample review of seven child records the details relating to (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) were in place.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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 children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. In line with service policy, healthy eating was encouraged. A variety of fresh fruit, dairy products, crackers, and sandwiches was noted for the mid-morning snack. Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during snack time. Staff were observed to use this opportunity to support education around dental health which formed a theme for the January curriculum plan. Potable water was available to the children to self-serve during the session.

The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities. The service operated in partnership with parents and guardians. A monthly newsletter is prepared and distributed to parents each month. Learning journals were in place and shared with parent at intervals throughout the year. A monthly learning story is displayed for parents to view. A verbal handover on the child's day was given to the parents and guardians at collection time. Children used the toilet independently and regular hand washing was observed.

The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection. Children were offered choices of what activities they wished to participate in.

Low level tables, chairs and low-level shelving with equipment were available to all children. The two pre-school rooms were laid out with areas of interest that incorporated real life play items and materials to stimulate each area of the child's development.

Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Materials included

paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

Children’s artwork was noted and paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open-ended art materials were in plentiful supply.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, sensory, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Soft furnishings in both pre-school rooms supported rest and relaxation for the children in attendance.

(4)

An outdoor play area with a tarmac surface area was attached to the side of the service and accessed directly from the main pre-school room.

A separate gated outdoor play area with an all-weather artificial grass surface area was located to the rear of the service. This area was equipped with wall mounted chalk boards, goal posts, playhouses, an outdoor play kitchen area and a bench. A section of the outdoor play area had bark and absorbent surface areas. These areas were equipped with a large climb and slide unit, two free standing slides and a triple swing unit.

A sheltered area was in place to facilitate all weather play for the children. A secure storage shed was used to store a variety of bikes and trikes for use by children.

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 two entrance doors to the service were secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. Appropriate documentation was in place to record the administration of medicine should it be required by a child in attendance.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit doors were in place in each pre-school room and were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings were not carried out.

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)
All staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the premises.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 firefighting 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 12 December 2022.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced on the 8 August 2022. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 14 February 2022.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children in attendance were always supervised by staff during the inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 23 March 2023.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
The premises consists of a single storey extension to the home of the registered provider and visually appears to be stable in structure.
- (b)
The entrance doors to the service were secure to ensure the safety of the children within.
- (c)
Openable windows provide both natural light and ventilation in the pre-school rooms. The light fittings were covered and fully operational to provide adequate artificial light to the rooms and sanitary accommodation. A digital thermometer was in place to monitor the occupied room temperature which was noted at 19 degrees Celsius.
- (d)
Cleaning schedules and systems were available and reviewed. Environmental cleaning was noted during the inspection. The premises was maintained in a hygienic condition.
- (e)
Two wash hand basins and water closets were available in the service. Thermostatically controlled warm water was available at the wash hand basins. The mechanical ventilation in the sanitary accommodation was functioning.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

Compliance Information

(b)
The registered provider submitted notification of incidents to the Agency within 3 working days in respect of (b) since the last inspection on the 22 March 2021.