

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO018		
Name of Service:	Holy Family Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Clarion Road, Sligo, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 RH99		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lorna Chambers		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	05/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello		
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

Holy family preschool is an early years' service established to meet the needs of children in the Sligo Leitrim area. Attending children have been referred to the service by the HSE Children's Disability Network Team. The service is registered for children aged 2- 6 years. It is a sessional service; however, children will have staggered start and finish times. The service had four care rooms; three rooms were in operation on the day of inspection.

Staffing

On the day the service had fifteen staff employed in the service. Nine staff were providing direct care to the children. The service also employed two bus drivers and one housekeeper. The person in charge is also available to provide direct care as required. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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, / safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 20, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 31. 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, deputy 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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

There was a person in charge and a named person available to deputise as required.

(1) (b)

The person in charge and deputy person were both present on the day of the inspection. On a sample review of rosters, there is a named person in charge available at all times.

(1) (c)

All adults working in the service were aware of their roles and responsibilities. A clear governance structure was in place.

(2) (a) (b)

Fifteen adults are employed in the service, and all fifteen staff files were reviewed on the day.

Twenty-eight written and verified past employer references and two written and verified references from a source other than a past employer were available for all fifteen adults.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been sourced for all fifteen adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was provided for the one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(3)

The required vetting procedures had been completed prior to an adult working directly with the preschool children.

(4)

Twelve adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were eight adults working directly with 13 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as follows:

- Green Room: 3 adults cared for 4 children aged from 4 years to 5 years of age.
- Blue Room: 2 adults cared for 4 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.
- Yellow Room: 3 adults cared for 5 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.
- Red Room: Closed

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The service has four care rooms, all adequately resourced with a wide variety of resources and equipment to meet the needs of the children attending the preschool service.

The ‘Yellow, Green and Blue’ rooms support children aged 3 to 5 years and are equipped with resources to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child. Interest areas are set up to create opportunities for sensorial play with sand and tuff trays. Creativity is promoted as evidenced by the art work displayed in all care rooms. All rooms have a small library and rest area. Literacy skills are supported with an array of prompt cards, tabletop activities and puzzles. Children were observed to be supported one to one completing literacy tasks in preparation for their transition to school. Fine motor skills are developed through building blocks, tweezers and sensory walls. The resources are carefully sourced to suit the age and stage of development of the preschool child.

The ‘red room’ is equipped with an overhead electric hoist to ensure access for all children regardless of their mobility needs. This hoist facilitates ease and comfort of transfer from one activity to another and into appropriate seating that is individually assessed. This hoist extends to the bathroom, where basic needs are supported in a manner that is respectful and maintains the dignity and comfort of the child.

The service has two additional ‘sensory rooms’ which create a safe space for children to relax and regulate. Soft lighting, sensory tubes, ball pools and soft matting, promote safe areas to encourage movement and relaxation. Each care room has their own designated outdoor space that provides a secure area for gross motor skill development. The outdoor areas are equipped with playhouses, climbing frames, a variety of ride on toys, footballs and resources. A polytunnel can be utilised by all children, where they learn about growing various fruits and vegetables. Ground surfaces are a mix of tarmacadam, shock absorbing surfaces and grass.

(1) (b)

The 'library' creates an area of calmness for children to relax and look at books or have a rest. Low level stackable beds with appropriate bed linen are provided in the service if children need a rest or sleep.

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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- Risk assessments of the indoor and outdoor areas are completed daily to ensure safety for the preschool children.
- The kitchen was secured with a safety gate and was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Windows were risk assessed and fitted with the appropriate window restrictors.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool child.
- Overhead electric hoists were available for safe transfer of children with mobility needs.

Infection Control:

- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to be supported to wash their hands prior to meal times, after using the bathroom and after completing nose hygiene.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules displayed and up to date in each care room.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was stored in a locked cabinet inaccessible to preschool children.
- The service employs nursing staff who administer medication as part of their role.

Safe Sleep:

- Stackable floor beds are available for sleep and rest as required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained unobstructed throughout the premises.
- All preschool children had an individual emergency evacuation plan in place. This plan highlighted the verbal and nonverbal prompts required to support the child to evacuate in a safe manner.

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)

Certification was provided of the two adults trained in first aid for children with an expiry date of June 2028.

(2) (a) (b)

A suitably stocked first aid box was safely stored and accessible to the preschool children if required.

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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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)

The service demonstrated that emergency evacuation drills take place on a monthly basis with the most recent occurring on the 08 January 2026.

(b)

The number and type of firefighting equipment available in the service was provided on the day with the most recent maintenance date of the 18 January 2026.

(2) (c)

These records were made available to the authorised person on the day.

(3)

The person in charge is aware of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for a period of 5 years.

(4)

Fire emergency evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in all care rooms.

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

Supervision was observed to be adequate throughout the day. The service is appropriately staffed operating above minimal ratios to ensure adequate supervision. In the indoor rooms, the staff members were observed to ensure that children were in view at all times. Staff members were observed to communicate well, linking in with team members if they had to leave the room for any duration.

The children in the service required one to one support in toileting and nappy changing and staff made efforts to promote independence. The service has two sensory rooms and a library. When children have access to these areas, the staff members supervise them effectively when transitioning and ensure adequate staffing numbers for supervision in all areas.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Certification of adequate insurance for 22 children in a sessional service with an expiration date of the 01 June 2026 was provided on the day.

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:

- (a) the death of a pre-school child while attending the service, including the death of a child in hospital following his or her transfer to hospital from the 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);*
- (c) an incident that occurs in the service and that results in the service being closed for any length of time;*
- (d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*
- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(a-e)

The person in charge confirmed that there had been no notification to Tusla since the last inspection. The person in charge is aware of the regulatory requirement to notify Tusla of any incident in relation to (a-e) within the required time frame.