

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY014				
Name of Service:	Willisson Preschool				
Address of Service:	Willisson, Monastery Road, Roscrea, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E53 RX65				
Name of Registered Provider:	Carol Thompson				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	28/11/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>21</td> <td>PM</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	AM	21	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney				
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

This sessional early years service was established to provide care and education to children aged 2 – 6 years. The service offers 2 sessions of 3 hours duration each day, the first from 8.50am – 11.50am and the second from 1pm – 4pm, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a purpose-built extension to the registered provider’s residence on the outskirts of the town of Roscrea in North Tipperary. The children have access to two activity rooms, sanitary accommodation area and a large outdoor play area.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service each day, supported by two or three members of staff depending on the number of children present. This includes staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). There are five staff on the roster, including the registered provider. All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11, 20, 21, 22, 24(1), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and recruitment.

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 registered provider, 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

The staff files of two staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 19 May 2021, were assessed as part of the inspection process. Staff files for the other staff had been reviewed previously and were found to be compliant.

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of both members of staff.

(b) Not applicable to this service as all available references were from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of both members of staff. Relevant documents were stored on file.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state.

Relevant documents were stored on file.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were 3 staff working directly with 21 children aged between 3 and 5 years on the morning of the inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1:7 on the morning of the inspection which was greater than minimum requirements of 1:11.

(8)(c) There were at least two staff present while the service was in operation.

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 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.

(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, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to two activity rooms for indoor play as well as a large outdoor area. The main room was set up for free play activities, dining, tabletop activities, sensory play, sand play, water play and imaginative play. The second room was smaller and was used for small group work, such as the pilot speech and language programme the service was currently engaged in. This room was also used for small world play, construction, library and quiet play or rest.

(b) The children could rest and relax in the smaller activity room where there were cushions and floor mats in the cosy area.

(3)(a) There was a large area at the back of the premises that was developed into an outdoor play area for the children. This space was enclosed and gated and included a variety of distinct spaces: The main playground had a tarmac surface with soft fall matting under fixed play equipment. The area beside this had a grass surface and a manmade hill with a tunnel running through it. The area at the back of the space was covered in mature trees and had a ground surface of soil, leaves and bark mulch.

There was a sheltered play space with a roof and walls on three sides where the children could engage in art or sit and relax. This space enabled the children to play outdoors in all weathers.

There were two storage containers outside the entrance door of the premises where the children stored their outdoor clothing such as rubber boots and water-proof overalls. Having suitable outdoor clothing also ensured that the children could access play in the outdoors each day.

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 service was well equipped both indoors and outdoors with a wide range toys, materials and furniture. The main room had two large, child height circular tables with child sized chairs where the children and staff sat for meals as well as tabletop activities. Adult seating was also available. Toys and materials were stored on open shelving units or in play furniture such as the toy kitchen. Dressing up clothes were stored on an open clothes rail. This enabled the children to see what they wanted to engage with and to access it independently. Notice boards held important information for parents, staff and children.

The outdoor area was equipped with a large purpose-built climbing frame with slides, tree house, bridge and swings. There were ride-on toys including balance bikes, tricycles, bicycles, scooters, tractors, taxis and chariots. There were picnic tables with bench seats where children and staff could sit to rest, play or eat. There was a campsite area in the woods with log seats and a fireplace. Other equipment included playhouse, balls, racquets, push toys, vehicles and gardening tools.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Children brought a packed lunch to eat at snack time. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge in the main room. Children set their place at the table using their handmade placemat before getting their lunch bags, boxes and drink bottles. Staff sat and ate with the children. Each child brought a drink bottle containing water or squash which was accessible to them throughout the session so that they could take a drink when they wanted one. The bottles were refilled with water when empty. Food eaten on the day of inspection included: smoothies, sandwiches, wraps, bread rolls, rice cakes, crackers, fromage frais, raisins and mandarins.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff recorded the arrival and departure times of the children on the attendance register.

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) Four members of staff held current certification in first aid response (FAR), valid until August 2025.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box stored on a shelf in the main activity room where it could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in September 2023. The smoke alarms were checked monthly during the fire drills.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall near the door.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for up to 24 children attending at any one time, valid until 27 March 2024.