

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY059		
Name of Service:	Silver Arch Preschool, Portroe		
Address of Service:	Portroe, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary		
Eircode:	E45 VA27		
Name of Registered Provider:	Maedhbh Gordon		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	02/10/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary		
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney and S O'Brien		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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

This sessional service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operated from 9.00am to 12.30pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year including a three-hour session from 9.00am to 12.00pm funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE/free pre-school) for eligible children. This is one of two service operated by North Tipperary Community Services, known as Silver Arch Family Resource Centre. The service is operated from rooms in a community hall in the village of Portroe, near Nenagh in North Tipperary. The service consists of a main early years room with a large space between the main hall and the early years room which is used by the service for physical movement activities. The children also have access to two outdoor play areas: one at the front and one at the back of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are three staff employed to work directly with the children in the service each day including one member of staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). Two members of staff were present on the day of inspection. All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and development at level 5, 6 or 8 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(3), 15(1)(3), 19(1), 20(1)(3), 21, 22,24,25 and 28. 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 inspectors wish 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

The staff files of the three members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a)(b) Staff references were held in the main offices of Silver Arch Family Resource Centre, Nenagh and were made available to the inspector to view. Written, validated references from past employers and sources other than past employers were available in respect of all staff who worked in the service, with a minimum of two references available for each member of staff.

(2)(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all members of staff and relevant documents were held on file. The service had a process in place to ensure that all staff were re-vetted on a three-yearly basis in line with best practice.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the staff for a period exceeding six consecutive months. Relevant documents were held on file.

(4) The three members of staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and development at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the national framework of qualifications. Copies of staff qualification certificates were displayed on the walls of the pre-school room.

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*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were two staff working directly with seven children attending the ECCE session on the morning of inspection. This met the minimum requirements of this regulation.
- (3) At all times the minimum adult to child ratio was maintained.
- (8)(c) There were at least two members of staff present while the service was in operation.

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) On the day of inspection seven children attended the preschool service and enrolment forms were available for all seven children. Twelve enrolment forms were assessed on the day of inspection. The registration forms were found to contain the information required under parts (a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (h) and (i) of this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registration forms were found to be missing the following information:

(c) A space and prompt to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service.

(g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Silver Arch Preschool registration/parent consent form updated to include the following items:

- Date child ceased service
- Child's Doctor Details – Name, Contact number.

Current children enrolled – parents contacted to forward contact details and name of doctor to record manually on file, date of the child ceasing will also be completed manually for the current registered children.

Updated forms will be issued for the any new child joining the service going forward.

Supporting Documentation

Copies of the updated registration forms and information sent to parents was received by the office of the early years inspectorate on 13 November 2024.

Summary Comment

The above-named actions address the non-compliance and meet the requirements of the regulation.

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

The children were observed playing in different interest areas during the morning. Staff supported the children if needed. One staff member was observed 'going shopping' with another child using the toys from the home corner such as shopping bags. The interaction between the adult and the child was very respectful and mannerly. The children's voices were listened to throughout the morning through free play, circle time and snack time. Staff supported the children with toileting if required and supervised children when handwashing. Handwashing was observed before morning snack. Children were encouraged to develop self-help skills which supported personal care and hygiene.

A visual display of the daily activities was displayed on the wall at child height making the children aware of what was next. This supported the children with transitions and coping with change. This also made the children aware of the programme of activities for the day.

The staff were very much aware of the cultural diversity of the children in their service and encourage children to learn how to say hello in different languages. The country flags were also displayed to recognise the cultures of all children.

Children's physical and communication development was supported during circle time by singing and moving their bodies.

The staff sat with the children during snack time, eating their own snack and chatting to the children which support relationships and communication skills.

One of the children was the chosen helper for the day and was responsible for handing out the children's lunch boxes to them from the fridge for snack time. The staff reminded the rest of the children to thank the helper when all of the lunch bags and boxes had been distributed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service contained one main early years room with a large room adjacent to the early years room that was used for physical movement. The children could move freely around the room which was well laid out in a variety of interest areas such as dress up area, role play area with a kitchen and hairdressers, library and cosy area, tabletop activities and dining area construction area and art area.

The children had daily access to both indoor and outdoor play, in one of the two outdoor play areas on the premises.

Both the indoor and outdoor areas were well maintained and organised to accommodate the needs of the children.

(b) Sleep facilities were not required as the children attended for 3.5 hours only and all children were aged over 2.5 years old. The service had a cosy area/library furnished with a child sized couch, mat and cushions for the children to sit and rest. Children were observed chatting and reading stories together in this area which showed

the children were building relationships with others. Staff were observed reading a story to all the children in this area after snack.

(3)(a) The service had two enclosed outdoor areas: one to the rear of the building with access through the main early years room and the other at the front of the building. The outdoor area at the back was the primary outdoor play space. This area was enclosed by fencing, a wall and gates. The ground surface was a fitted all weather surface with soft-fall properties. This area had been renovated since the last inspection in February 2022 and the high concrete wall had been painted with bright colours and shapes which contributed to making this an attractive and inviting space. The area at the front of the building was enclosed by low level metal fencing and a gate and had a concrete surface. Children had access to outdoor play in one or both of these spaces each day as well as weekly walks in the village and to the local GAA pitch.

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 with furniture, toys and materials suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service and for use by the staff. There were three child sized tables with chairs in one half of the main room which the children used for dining and table top activities. Child sized sofas were available in the cosy area/library and a standard sized sofa was available in the adjacent room. There were also standard sized chairs for use by the staff.

Toys and materials were displayed on open shelving units or in specially designed units, such as the kitchen in the home corner, where they were easily accessible to the children. The range of toys and equipment available to the children included the following: Food and crockery were available for the kitchen. Art and craft materials were available in child height shelving with paper for free drawing. Construction materials of plastic block, sticky bricks and small world figures, roll along cars with a road mat were also available. A sensory table was available with a treasure basket, pinecones, leaves and glitter and water filled bottle. Tabletop toys were available such as jigsaws and peg boards. An activity wall was at child height where mirrors and magnet pens were available to explore.

The main outdoor play area was also well equipped: there was a climbing frame, a playhouse, a kitchen and a chalkboard available to the children. Equipment was not left in the outdoor play area at the front of the building. The staff brought resources such as balls, hoops, gardening equipment, chalk and push toys outside when this space was used.

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 from home to eat at snack time. On the day of inspection the children’s snacks consisted of strawberries, oranges, crackers, ham and cheese sandwiches, cheese sticks, bread sticks, cereal bars and yoghurts. Snacks were varied and allowed the children choice. Children had adequate amounts of food throughout the day. Water and squash was available to the children through their own water bottles which could be refilled if needed from a water tap in the room.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children in an attendance register designed for that purpose.

(3)(a) Staff met all visitors to the service at the entrance door to the early years part of the community hall before allowing them entry, if appropriate.

(b) A written record was maintained of any visitors to the service including their name, date and purpose of the visit.

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) First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates were available for three staff working in the service. At least one staff member was available at all times, while the service was operating, available to administer first aid if required.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service and was stored safely on a shelf within the main early years room.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service held current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The insurance certificate was available for inspection on the day and was valid until 27 March 2025.