

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY065				
Name of Service:	St Mary's Pre-School				
Address of Service:	St. Mary's Hall, Roscrea Road, Templemore, Co. Tipperary				
Eircode:	E41 P300				
Name of Registered Provider:	Kathleen Bergin				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	19/04/2023				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>4</td> <td>PM</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	AM	4	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 service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm, for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

A registered school aged care service is operated outside the hours of the early years service.

The service is operated from a parish hall in the town of Templemore beside St Mary’s primary school and St Mary’s Church. The service uses the entire premises during the hours of operation of the service, which includes the main hall, side room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play area.

Staffing

There has been a change in registered provider since the last inspection in 2020. The registered provider works directly with the children each day, assisted by a member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Another member of staff was available to call on if required to provide relief.

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.

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

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 all staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

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

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

(c) garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all members of staff.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

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

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 two staff working directly with the four children, aged between 3 and 5 years old, for the duration of the session.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at one adult to two children which was greater than the minimum requirement of one adult to eleven children.

(8)(c) There were two staff present while the service was in operation and another person familiar with the children and operation of the service who could be called on when required.

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.

(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) The children enjoyed freedom of access to all of the indoor spaces as well as to outdoor play. The main hall was divided into two distinct areas by the use of mobile partitions. The area near the entrance door was set up for relaxation, reading and quiet time, while the other end of the hall was set up for imaginative play, dress up, construction, manipulative play and puzzles. The side room was set up for tabletop activities, dining, art and craft, puzzles and Montessori.

(b) There was no requirement for sleep facilities as the children attended for three hours each day and all children were aged over three years. There was a cosy area set up in part of the main hall, separated by the use of mobile shelving units and corrugated plastic partitions. This space had a large floor mat, beanbags and cushions for the children to relax and rest away from the general play area.

(4) The children had daily access to outdoor play in the space behind the premises. This space was enclosed by high concrete walls and gates. The ground surface was concrete, with soft fall mats used under climbing frames and equipment with a fall height above 60cm.

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 a wide variety of toys, materials and furniture suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. There was a large oval shaped table in the side room that supported group activities including dining and circle time conversations. Child and adult seating was available. Toys and materials were displayed on open shelving units which made it easy for children to see and access what they wanted to play with. Outdoor equipment included: climbing cube with slide, balance bikes, mud kitchen, sensory play station, large outdoor games, playhouse, picnic table and bench seats, car track, tyre seating and sensory play area.

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 packed lunches which were eaten together at about 10.30am. There was a fridge in the kitchen for the storage of perishable foods. There was drinking water available from the tap in the kitchen and children brought their own drinks in bottles that were refilled when required. Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: sandwiches, smoothies, fruit and oat bars, crackers, home baking and fruit dairy snacks.

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 recorded the arrival and departure times of the children in the register for the service.

(3)(a) The registered provider met all visitors to the service at the entrance door before approving their admission to the premises.

(b) There was a record of all visitors to the service, which the early years inspector signed on arrival.

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) One member of staff held current certification in first aid response (FAR) and one member of staff held current certification in paediatric first aid.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box available on a shelf in the side room, where it was easily accessible when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if needed 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, most recently on 20 March 2023.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. The annual service of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was carried out on 27 October 2022.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was current insurance cover for the service for up to 22 early years children and 20 school aged children, valid until 27 March 2024.