

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY065
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Name of Service:	St Mary's Pre-School
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Address of Service:	St. Mary's Hall, Roscrea Road, Templemore, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 P300
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kathleen Bergin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
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	N/A
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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 old.

A registered school age care service is also provided, outside the hours of the pre-school service.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 40 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from St Mary’s parish hall, adjacent to St Mary’s primary school in the town of Templemore in north Tipperary. The building consists of the main hall, a smaller side room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and enclosed outdoor play area.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service on a daily basis with the assistance of two other members of staff, including staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). A third level childcare student was on work placement in the service at the time of the inspection.

Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 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(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(3), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23, 24(1)(3) 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

(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.*

(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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who could deputise in her absence.

(b) The registered provider or her deputy were present in the service while it was in operation.

(c) The service had a clearly defined management structure that was documented and available in the staff folder.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that of the three staff employed in the service, and the student on work placement, two staff members were employed at the time of the previous inspection in April 2023. All four staff files were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member and the student working in the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member and the student working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting documentation was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.

(4) Staff employed in the service 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.

Compliance Information

(1) There were 2 staff working directly with 10 children aged between 3 and 5 years old at 10am on the day of inspection. By 10.15am there was a third member of staff present.

(3) The adult to child ratios were maintained at greater than the minimum requirement of 1 adult to 11 children throughout the day. The childcare student was not included in the adult to child ratios but was also present and worked with the children.

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) The completed registration forms for the 12 children enrolled in the service were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registration forms contained the information that was required to be kept in writing in respect of each child attending the service as detailed under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The records were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;

(c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;

(d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;

(e) the facilities available;

(f) the opening hours and fees;

(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Written records containing the required information about the service as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation, were available.

(3) The required information was available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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-
(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

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The children enjoyed freedom of choice and freedom of movement between the two rooms of the service. Each play space was set up in a variety of defined interest areas with staff available in each area to support the children and provide guidance when required. Staff sat with the children and were available to them according to each child's needs.

The children were given opportunities to speak and be listened to by all the staff and children during activities such as circle-time when each child got a turn to share their news.

The staff used props such as the sand timer to aid with transitions such as from freeplay to tidy-up time. The timer was also used effectively to support turn taking and sharing of popular toys or equipment.

The beneficial adult to child ratio enabled the staff to work collaboratively to ensure the smooth flow of the day, for example, while one member of staff was preparing the morning snack, another member of staff led circle-time. A third member of staff called children in twos to wash their hands so that they would be ready for snack time when circle time was finished.

Children and staff sat together for snack time, chatting and making plans while they ate. The service was in the Bia Blasta (delicious food) scheme which supported and funded health eating in pre-schools. The children enjoyed a selection of healthy snacks on the day of inspection which included: slices of ham, salami and cheese, crackers, crispbread and strawberries. Snack time was used as an opportunity for the children to learn new skills such as buttering their own crackers, with staff assistance as required. Children were given as much time to eat as they needed.

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 service was kept secured while it was in operation. Entry and exit was via the front door of the hall which was secured by a wooden door that opened into an entrance lobby. Staff met parents, children and visitors to the service at the door. There was a bell to alert staff that someone was seeking entrance to the premises.

The outdoor area was at the back of the premises, surrounded by walls and fencing. There was a door in the wall that gave access from the outdoor area to the front of the premises. This door was kept secured while the service was in operation. This prevented unauthorised access to the premises and prevented children from gaining unsupervised access to the roadway in front of the premises

Warm water for hand washing was heated by electric water heaters that were thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.

Infection control:

The service had an infection prevention and control policy which included hand washing. Staff and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times of the day such as before eating or handling food and after messy play or using the toilet.

Staff wore disposable gloves when involved in food preparation and distribution during snack time.
Equipment, such as the children's toilet seat, was replaced when it became worn and difficult to clean effectively.

Administration of medication:

There was a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being administered to a child.

Fire safety:

The fire escape routes and fire doors were kept clear of obstruction.

Outing:

The service had an outings policy. The children went on outings to the town park and playground during the year. The children and staff walked on these outings. The adult to child ratio for outings was 1:3.

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 the daily attendance register.

(3)(a) Staff met all visitors to the service at the front door before allowing them entry to the service if appropriate.

(b) A written record was maintained of all visitors to 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 had current insurance cover for up to 22 children at any one time, valid until 27 March 2026.