

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY072		
Name of Service:	Silver Arch Preschool		
Address of Service:	Main Street, Templederry, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary		
Eircode:	E45 EV84		
Name of Registered Provider:	Maedhbh Gordon		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	25/09/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary		
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney and A McNamara		
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
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Description of service

This sessional service was established to provide care and education to children aged 2 – 6 years old in the village of Templederry in North Tipperary. The service operates a morning session between 9am and 12pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE/free pre-school) for eligible children. This service is operated by Silver Arch family resource centre and is a sister service to Silver Arch Preschool, Portroe. This service is operated from a two-storey, semi-detached premises on the main street of Templederry village. The service is operated on the ground floor of the premises and consists of two activity rooms, sanitary accommodation areas and a kitchenette. The outdoor play area is at the back and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are two staff employed in the service who work directly with the children each day. Both staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 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.

Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1)(3)(8)(c) Staffing levels

Regulation 15 Record of the Pre-school child

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 22 Food and Drink

Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance

Regulation 25 First aid

Regulation 28 Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of the Pre-school child.

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 two 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 the 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 each member of staff. Relevant documents were held on file. The service had a process in place to ensure that staff were re-vetted every three years in line with best practice.

(d) Not applicable as staff had not lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications at levels 5 or 6 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) During the morning session there were 20 children being directly cared for by 2 staff.

(8)(c) There were at least two 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.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of 6 registration forms were assessed as part of the inspection process. 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 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-

(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 following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending the service:

Healthy eating was promoting within the service. Each child was given enough time to eat their snacks without being rushed. The 'red clock' with a visual timer was used during mealtimes as well as other activities and transitions throughout the day. Staff set the timer for 35 minutes and they said that the clock had helped the children to relax during snack time as they could see how much time they had left. Children were encouraged to tidy up after snack time which helps promote independence.

The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own level of personal care appropriate to their level of development. The privacy and dignity of each child was respected.

The staff were observed to supervise children's hand washing before snack time.

Designated rest area was evident in the room. Children could use this area to relax.

The staff and children took part in defined activities on three days of the week to help the children understand the passage of time, what day of the week it was and to provide a sense of security through predictability.

They made playdough on 'messy Monday', visited places in the village such as the post office and GAA pitch on 'walking Wednesday' and the staff brought in fruits for the children to try on 'fruity Friday'.

Staff were observed to be patient, enthusiastic and present to the children, responding promptly to their needs and desires. Staff kept a note of the children's emerging interests and incorporated these into the themes and plans for the day or week. As a result the children appeared to be confident and relaxed in their environment, in exploring, making choices, asking for what they needed and following their own creative ideas and initiatives.

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.

(2) A registered provider-

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children enjoyed freedom of movement between the two activity rooms in the service. The room at the front of the premises, faced the main street of the village. The children could see out through the partially frosted glass in the large windows in the front wall which helped make the room bright. The front room was set up for table top activities, dining, small world play, imaginative play, rest and relaxation and creative activities. The back room was a little smaller than the front room and provided the children with a different range of opportunities and experiences including dress up, sensory play and construction.

The children had access to an outdoor play area at the back and side of the premises, which could be used in all weathers. The children also had weekly access to the playing pitches in the village which were located near the service.

(b) The children could rest and relax on the child sized sofas and cushions in the cosy area in the front room.

(2)(b) The outdoor play area was enclosed with concrete walls and a large metal gate. The gate was kept secured and only opened if children finished the morning with outdoor play and were outside when their parents or carers came to collect them. There were two large sheds that were fitted out for outdoor play and provided the children with sheltered outdoor space where they could play in all weathers. The yard had concrete and tarmac surfaces.

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 consisted of two large preschool room which were very well equipped with a range of toys, materials and furniture suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. Adequate space was available for children to engage in both floor and table play independently and in groups. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as Montessori work, playdough, puzzles and eating at snack time in both rooms. The front pre-school room had several defined interest areas which were appropriately resourced, including the home corner, art and craft materials, a dolls house and dress up. There were low level open shelves around the room where Montessori work, jigsaws/puzzles and manipulative play toys were easily accessible to the children. The second room had musical instruments, a large selection of books, a children's blackboard and a building area.

The outdoor play equipment included planting areas, ride-on toys, climbing equipment and slides, balls, push toys, water play and wall mounted backboards.

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 that was eaten during the morning break at 10.30am. Adequate, suitable food was observed on the day of inspection. The children brought individual drink bottles filled with water or squash which they could access at any time during the day when they wanted a drink.

Drinking water was available to the children and their bottles were refilled with water when required. Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: brown bread and butter, sandwiches, yoghurt drinks, yoghurt, fromage frais, crackers, home baked buns, rice cakes, croissants, carrot sticks, mandarins, cheese, apples, watermelon, and blueberries.

Birthdays were celebrated with a cake, supplied by the service and nut free to meet allergy needs.

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 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) Both staff held current certification on first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box adjacent to the wall-mounted medicine cabinet in the front room.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service. The first aid box was taken on outings in case it was required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.