

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY084		
Name of Service:	Ardfinnan Community Playschool		
Address of Service:	Lady's Abbey, Ardfinnan, Clonmel, Co Tipperary		
Eircode:	E91 RP21		
Name of Registered Provider:	Breda Murphy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	24/03/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38		
Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara		
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

Ardfinnan Community Playschool is a sessional early years service established since 2003 and operating from its current premises since 2007. The service is located in the centre of Ardfinnan village in Co Tipperary. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates a morning session from 09:00 to 12:00 and an afternoon session from 13:00 to 16:00, Monday to Friday. The maximum number of children that the service can cater for at any one time is 22.

Staffing

There were three staff members present on the day of inspection. Two of the staff members were working directly with the children while the third staff member facilitated the inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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 the child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(3) Staffing levels,

Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) Records in relation to a pre-school child,

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of the child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire safety and
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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 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

(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*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy designated person in charge who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.

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

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

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member 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) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.

(4) There were four staff employed by the service who held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 adequate staffing levels to respond to the children's needs on the day of inspection.
- (3) During the morning session there were 19 children being directly cared for by 2 staff.

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

A sample of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this 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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, review of records and discussions with staff:

Basic needs:

The children enjoyed freedom of movement around the main care room on the morning of inspection. The care room had direct access out on to an enclosed play area with a mud garden. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities. Staff reported that children played outside daily. There was also a sensory room that was available to all of the children and used as needed.

There was a rest area available where the children could rest and relax during the day. This space was furnished with floor rugs and child sized vinyl covered sofas.

The service had a healthy eating policy. The children brought their own food to the service. Children had access to drinking water and were able to get a drink throughout the day.

The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own level of personal care appropriate to their level of development. For example, children were able to access the toilet independently throughout the day.

Supporting relationships:

The children were cared for by the same team of staff each day, which supported the development of secure relationships between the children and staff. The adult to child ratios in the room ensured that each child received as much individual time as they required. Staff engaged with the children in activities and conversations taking opportunities to listen actively to the children as they communicated their ideas and needs. The children demonstrated a comfortable familiarity with the staff caring for them in their rooms and in the service overall. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of their arts and crafts, birthday wall, and a family scrap book. The environment was inclusive and representative of the children attending the service. Languages other than English were displayed in the service. On the week of inspection, the service was preparing for Mother's Day by growing a sunflower which would be sent home with the children on Friday.

Physical and material environment:

The environment in the service was comfortable and inviting. The children had access to a care room, sensory area, outdoor space, and sanitary accommodation. The service had appropriately sized tables and chairs for the children. The service had personalised coat hooks for each child attending the service. Defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play within the care room. These included a kitchen area, a library area, and craft area. Low-level shelving provided children with access to a wide selection of activities suitable for the age and stage of the children in the care room. Children were observed to engage in arts and crafts, and in imaginative play. The children's artwork and learning about Spring was displayed on the walls of the service.

The outdoor play area was divided in two and had a variety of surfaces and resources to support the children's exploration of the outdoors. The care room had direct access to the outdoor area. Outside was a soft play and grass area with a selection of ride on toys, a climbing frame, mud kitchen and a shed with additional resources. Part of the outdoor area had been turned into a mud garden which the children also had access to.

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) There were staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children 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 record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 13th March 2025 and staff advised that monthly fire drills were completed.
- (b) There was a record available demonstrating that the smoke alarm system was last serviced in on the 13th March 2025 and the firefighting equipment was last serviced in on the 13th March 2025.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

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.