

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY113
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Name of Service:	Happy Days Preschool
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Address of Service:	Mount Bruis NS, Mount Bruis, Rathkea, Tipperary Town, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E34 RD26
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Heffernan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
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Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

The sessional service was established in 2014. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme is provided from 09:00 to 12:00 hours Monday to Friday for 38 weeks per year. The service caters for children 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from a large room in a unit on the grounds of Mount Bruis National School. The children have access to outdoor areas on the grounds of the school. The service also provides a school age service.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were three staff working in the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge and works directly with the children. All staff employed held qualifications at a level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 (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 16 (1) (j, k) Record in relation to pre-school service,

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare, and development of the child,
Regulation 21 Equipment and materials
Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 First aid,
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 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

(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 is the person in charge and oversees the operation of the childcare facility. One deputy was identified.

(b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the inspection process.

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

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

(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) Police vetting documentation was available for one staff working in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above 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) The registered provider ensured that there were enough adults to respond to children's individual needs. There were 3 staff directly working with 12 children.

(3) At all times during the inspection the registered provider ensured that the adult to children ratio was maintained. The service exceeded the minimum child to adult ratio required under the regulation.

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 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:

- (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.*

Compliance Information

(j) Medication administration records were sampled and were found to meet the necessary requirements. Written parental consent for staff to administer medication had also been obtained.

(k) A total of 15 accident and incident records were sampled and deemed satisfactory.

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 classroom on the morning of inspection. The classroom had direct access out on to an outdoor area. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities. Staff reported that children played outside daily. There was a rest area available where the children could rest and relax during the day. This space was furnished with a rug and a large couch. 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. Tissues were freely available for children to blow their own noses and wipe their faces. Children appeared very relaxed in their environment and played happily.

Supporting relationships:

The children benefitted from the very favourable adult to child ratios which enabled each child to receive as much individual attention and support as they needed. The small group size supported the children to get to know each other well and to develop friendships within the group. Children were observed to engage in arts and crafts for Easter and were supported by staff. Interactions between staff and children were warm and sensitive. Staff spoke in low tones of voice and interacted with children at their level. The staff were fully engaged in play down on the floor with the children. For example, the staff read a story to the children in the morning and there was continuous interactions and chatting observed. A playful atmosphere was observed, with staff engaging actively in games and play with the children. Learning and development were supported through stimulating warm interactions.

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 one large preschool room which was 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. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as Montessori work, playdough, puzzles and eating at snack time. The room had a number of defined interest areas which were appropriately resourced, including an outer space corner, home corner, art and craft materials, a writing corner, messy play area, building blocks and a reading corner. There were low level open shelves around the room where Montessori work and jigsaws/puzzles were available to the children.

There was a vets corner set up for the children. Staff reported that this was changed regularly based on the children's interest.

The outdoor area was shared with the primary school. Prior to the children going out staff set up the outdoor area. There was a soft play area, a slide/climbing frame, balance blocks, a mud kitchen and a range of ride on toys. There was also a covered outdoor area available to the children.

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 premises was adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access. The entrance door to the service had to be opened by a staff member. Cleaning agents and hazardous materials were stored inaccessible to children. All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Radiator covers were in place over the heat sources.

Infection control:

There was warm running water, liquid soap, hand dryers and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. There were designated children's toilets available to the children. Designated staff toilets were also provided. Hand sanitizer was also available on entry to the service.

Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as after using the toilet or a tissue. Tissues and a pedal bin for the disposal of tissues was also available to the children. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection. A fire blanket and fire extinguishers were available for use in the service.

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 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.