

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD012
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Name of Service:	Bluebells Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Knockboy, Dunmore Road, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 EH67
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen McNamara
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

Bluebells Playschool is a privately owned and run preschool service. It is situated in a rural setting outside Waterford city. A sessional service is provided to children from 2 to 6 years of age. A play based programme is provided under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The service is open from 08:45hrs to 12:00hrs daily and is attached to the registered provider's home. There are three preschool rooms, toilets, and nappy changing facilities on the premises. The children have direct access to an outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are two staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. All staff employed in the service held the minimum of level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),
Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),
Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,
Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),
Regulation 24 Fire Safety

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) (b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were two staff employed in the service, including the registered provider. Both files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There were two written and validated references available on file from past employers for the staff member. There were two written references available on file for the registered provider which did not require to be validated.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for both staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence on file that both staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above 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.

(children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(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 an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service at all times.

(3)

There were 11 children directly cared for by 2 staff.

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 registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together and playing together in the outdoor area. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, by putting on their own coats to go outside to play. It was a particularly cold day, and the inspector observed that staff were attentive to ensure all the children were warmly wrapped up with coats, hats, and gloves to keep them warm outside.

During activities staff were attentive to the children. For example, children in the outdoor area were encouraged to take turns and share the play equipment with their friends. Staff who spoke to the inspector were familiar with the children's likes, dislikes and family backgrounds. The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials, jigsaws and a library section in the main preschool room. Children had prepared original artwork. They had painted lasagne sheets. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they had planned to break them up when they were dry to help the children make mosaic tiles.

There was a range of equipment and materials available in the outdoor area. There was an outdoor kitchen, a slide a playhouse and a picnic table. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they sometimes brought the children on nature walks around the registered provider's garden.

Children were observed enjoying a variety of healthy snacks which were provided by parents. Children were encouraged to be independent with their toileting needs and given help when required.

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

The registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door of the service which was secure on arrival. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves that were in accessible to children. The outdoor play area to the rear of the service was safe, suitable and secure.

Infection control:

The service appeared clean on the day of inspection. Hand washing was observed in the service. Children were observed being supported by staff to wash their hands properly. Liquid soap, disposable hand towels and pedal bins were available. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the toilet was recorded at 30°C on the day of inspection.

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 was a person trained in first aid immediately available to the children attending the preschool service.
- (2)(a)(b)
There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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 that had taken place was recorded in January 2024.
- (b)
The annual record of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises was last carried out in June 2023. The fire alarm was last serviced in January 2024.
- (4)
There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position beside the entrance door to the service.