

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD016
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Name of Service:	Butlerstown Playschool
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Address of Service:	Old National School, Fr Rufus Halley Centre, Butlerstown, Co. Waterford
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Name of Registered Provider:	Denise Doherty
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	04/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Ryan.
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

Butlerstown Playschool is a privately run sessional preschool service operating from an old schoolhouse since 1981 in Butlerstown east county Waterford. The building is approximately on one acre of ground in the ownership of the local parish and is used by numerous other parish groups. The preschool service has sole use of one room, designated sanitary accommodation, and kitchen facilities if required. A large outdoor play area is available at the rear of the premises. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:30hrs to 13:00hrs.

Staffing

The registered provider and one family member operate the service on a daily basis.

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. The following regulations were inspected:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of 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 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 was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the registered provider was on the premises.

(2)

On review of the staff files, there was no change in the staff since the last inspection on 7 May 2021, and all staff files were compliant on review at the last inspection.

(4)

There was evidence that the staff available to work directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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)

In the morning session there were 15 children aged 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 2 staff

(3)

The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirements for sessional care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed and explained in relation to the provision of the programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

On arrival at the service the inspector was warmly greeted, the atmosphere was busy and friendly, and the children were observed to be comfortable in their surroundings.

The service had sole use of one room within the building for the playschool. The large outdoor play area at the rear of the premises that had been extensively refurbished to offer a variety of natural and challenging play opportunities for the children. The registered provider explained to the inspector that the ethos of the service was for children learning through play with “open, flexible and child-led programmes.” The service had a documented detailed programme of care and learning. The registered provider also spoke about how the session for the main part had moved outdoors since the Covid pandemic. To facilitate this outdoor emphasis the extensive outdoor play space was covered with acrylic glass which extended over half of the outdoor play space.

On the day of the inspection there was yellow storm warning with heavy rain and winds, so the registered provider had decided to keep the children indoors. However since the last inspection the registered provider had continued to add to the increasing creative and natural opportunities available to the children, a large timber boat and a castle erected at a high point on the grass mound were some of the new additions. The registered provider explained that all aspects of the service were created for children to express themselves freely, this was evident especially outdoors with the expanse of creative opportunities such as, a timber crawling tunnel with an overarching climbing wall, the extra-large sand digging area and an extensive well-resourced outdoor kitchen area.

Indoors on the wall pictorial displays of the daily rhythm, birthday charts and family photographs were all at child level. The registered provider was observed gently leading one of the children to the wall and encouragingly pointing to and explaining what activity was happening next.

The children sat around two tables for the lunch break while a daily leader was appointed to hand out the bags. The registered provider explained that daily leader was nominated for this task in alphabetical order of their first name which in turn was a gentle introduction to literacy. The child nominated on the day was observed to take pride in this responsibility. This system was observed to encourage sociable behaviour between the children as observed when two children were observed explaining and helping each other to close each other's lunch boxes.

The programme followed the seasons and festivals. Cards with hearts for Mother's Day were in progress, these included the children's fingerprints and a typed poem reflecting on fingerprints that might have been left on walls, windows and doors around the child's home finishing with an expression of gratitude. These poems were read to each child on completion of the card.

The service kept folders of the children's art and craft work and photographs supporting children's learning through the naturally occurring medium of play.