

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD035
Name of Service:	Fenor Preschool and Afterschool
Address of Service:	c/o Fenor Primary School, Fenor, Co. Waterford
Eircode:	X91 VK31
Name of Registered Provider:	Denise Keating
Service type:	Full Day
Date(s) of Inspection:	29/02/2024
No of pre-school children:	AM 27 PM 13
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford
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

Fenor Pre-School and Afterschool service is located in the rural village of Fenor East County Waterford. The current premises was purpose built in 2013 and the service first opened in 1989. Fenor pre-school is located within the building of Fenor national school operating from two rooms on the premises with independent kitchenette and sanitary accommodation. Adjacent to the pre-school rooms the school playground is available for outdoor play and the service has recently erected a play area for the sole use of the pre-school. Additional usage of all the primary school facilities is available to the pre-school such as the main hall and sports equipment. The Fenor Pre-School operates as full day care and opens at 08:30hrs. to 17:20hrs. Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme ECCE in the mornings from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs. Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The service employs a manager who is part of the staff compliment and 10 childcare workers.

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 /child safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

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, 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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 manager 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 manager and registered provider were on the premises.
 - (c) The service was governed by the board of management of Fenor National School the registered provider was the school principal who was a member of the board. There were clear details regarding the lines of accountability and responsibility for the committee and the staff working in the service.

Since the last inspection on the 17 May 2021 and on review of the staff files, it was evident that seven new staff members were employed to work with the children in the service. The files of the other staff had been reviewed and found compliant on previous inspections.

- (2)
- (a) Fourteen written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff members working in the service, with recorded validations for each reference.
- (b) Not applicable as employee references from a reputable source were not required.
- (c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána available on file for all staff and these were completed in the last three years.
- (d) One of the new staff employed since the last inspection had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months and a police vetting certificate was available from that jurisdiction.

(4)

There was evidence that staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. The qualification exemption requirement for staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) was available

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.*
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- On the day of inspection, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)

On the morning of the inspection the staff: child ratios were maintained as follows:

In preschool room 1, there were 15 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff members.

In the pre-school room 2, there were 12 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 staff members.

On the afternoon of the inspection the 13 pre-school children were cared for in pre-school room 2 with 3 staff members.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The two rooms being used for the preschool service were observed to be cheerful, colourful and stimulating. Both rooms were kitted with age-appropriate tables, chairs and low-level shelves for toys and materials to be freely available and accessible to children. The rooms were zoned into areas of special interest for the children such as: well-resourced home corners, messy and sensorial play areas. There were art and craft spaces and small world play tables changed in accordance with children’s emerging interests. The walls had displays of children’s art and craft work.

(b)

Since the last inspection there was change in the room layout, the rest area in pre-school room had become a totally enclosed sensory/rest room. The manager informed the inspector that the addition of this sensory room was particularly versatile for use as a sleep room as well as for a breakout room for children needing support to regulate as was observed on the day of the inspection. The manager also noted a further additional benefit was to give some children the opportunity for one-to-one time with staff when necessary. The room was well resourced and laid out with the provision of soft wall and floor matting throughout. Appropriate specialised sensorial experiences with lights such as light tails and wall projector images. There were selections of sensorial experiences such as therapy balls and a ball pool.

3(a)

The pre-school playground was a secured wire mesh fencing enclosure within the main playground environs of the school, this was surfaced with synthetic grass and newly fitted fall safe surfaces. The manager explained that the timber planter boxes facilitated various tactile opportunities outdoors as well as the mounted chalk boards. Since the last inspection an extensive, high-quality purpose-built activity frame was secured for this area. This had a climbing wall, slide and a selection of graduated swings. A further newly secured natural grassed area to the front of the school was available to the pre-school children. The pre-school children also shared the use of the junior cycle playground with the national school.

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

There was a healthy eating policy for the service. There was a kitchen available off pre-school 1, this kitchen had a microwave and cooker to facilitate the reheating of food and refrigerators for the storage of perishable snacks provided by parents. The kitchen was inspected by the Health Service Executive (HSE) Environmental Health Services over the last few years. The snack foods provided by the service were observed to consist of toast and fresh fruit. Children who availed of full day care (for more than 5 hours) brought their main meal from home which was reheated, some meals observed were rice and pasta dishes. The second snack provided by the service was at 14:00hrs with the school age children attending afterschool care in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

The healthy eating policy omitted to specify the arrangements in place regarding the provision of food throughout the day for children. There was no sample menu provided in the policy for children attending the service on a full day care basis. As the main meal in the service is brought from the child's home, the policy did not advise parents and guardians what foods can be brought into the service.

The second snack provided to the pre-school children by the service was at 14:00 hrs consisted of toast, this was insufficient in nutritional content and for children availing of full day care remaining in the service until 17:20hrs. Food and Nutrition Guidelines for Pre-School Services advise that children attending full day care (for more than 5 hours) have at least two meals and two snacks offered to them, one of which is a hot meal. If a child does not want the food offered for any reason, a healthy alternative should be offered. Please refer to these guidelines for further information.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The first CAPA response submitted to the inspectorate on 9 April 2024 was insufficient and required further clarification.

The manager stated in the 2nd CAPA response on 18 April 2024 the following:

1. Children are offered breakfast upon arrival if they have not had it parents will tell us by informal verbal handover this would consist of porridge or cereal.
2. Children have toast and fresh fruit each morning at approx. 10am.
3. Children have a hot meal at 12.30 sent from home.
4. A snack consisting of toast or food from home is provided at 2pm. Our children bring a variety of healthy food each day that they can access on demand.
5. At 4pm children regroup, and lunch boxes are checked by their key worker. We keep breadsticks and babybel cheese to offer if they require a snack at this point. As mentioned on the day of inspection we have offered yogurt in the past, but children had declined as they would also have it in their lunchbox.
6. A rolling snack is important to us so children can access healthy food on demand each child is monitored by their key worker.

The manager stated in this response on 18 April that key workers monitor hand hygiene, and that is offered on demand as well as set times in this child led setting. This is carefully monitored via key worker system and parents are advised if children are not eating adequately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs were submitted from pages of the healthy eating policy in the parent's handbook on the 9 April 2024. These highlighted and indicated the advice given to parents on the foods to provide to the service to meet children's food and nutritional requirements throughout the day.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted on 18 April 2024 were appropriate to address the non-compliances under regulation 22 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. The implementation will be reviewed on the next 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)

Documented evidence was available to demonstrate that four staff members had current first aid responder training FAR and were on site daily during the service hours.

(2)

(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid bag held in the kitchen area.

(b) The first aid bag was suitably accessible and available to the pre-school room.

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) A record in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 9 February 2024.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last checked on 9 March 2023 and the smoke alarms were last checked on the 12 January 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure with details of the measures to be taken in the event of a fire were displayed in the pre-school rooms.