

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WD052
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mount Sion Playschool
-------------------------	-----------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Mount Sion Primary School, Barrack Street, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	X91 NF77
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michael Walsh
-------------------------------------	---------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	26/01/2024
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	n/a
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. Ryan.
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Mount Sion Preschool is located in inner city Waterford. The service operates from the Mount Sion primary school complex in two separate buildings, the portacabin and the hall. The service presently offers two separate sessions for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs Monday to Friday.

### Staffing

The school principal is the registered provider. The service employs a manager who is part of the staff compliment and three other childcare staff.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare 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, 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 and the service had a named designated staff member who was able to deputise, if required.

(b) During the inspection, the manager was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c) The service was governed by the board of management of the Christian Brothers Mount Sion national school. There were details available indicating the arrangements and staff structure of Mount Sion pre-school. The roles, responsibilities and the lines of authority for the service were clear.

Since the last inspection on the 18 May 2021 and on review of the staff files, it was evident that one new staff member was 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) Two written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff member working in the service, with recorded validations of 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 on file and completed in the last three years in respect of the new staff member working directly with the children in the service.

(d) Not applicable as Police vetting certificates were not required.

(4) There was evidence that the new staff member employed in the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 6.

## 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)  
On the day of the inspection there were 19 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 4 childcare staff.

(3)  
The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirement for 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-*  
*(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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to providing a programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

There were two sessional ECCE programmes in operation at the same time. One was in a modular unit known by the staff as the 'portacabin', that was made available for the younger children attending for the first year of the scheme. The second building was a refurbished and renovated 'hall room' where the older children on the second year of the ECCE scheme were accommodated.

The atmosphere in both rooms was busy, pleasant and friendly. The children were cared for by the same staff each day and the interactions between the children and staff were relaxed, familiar and caring. Both buildings were well-resourced and laid out with designated areas of interest such as home corners, messy play areas with sand and water play. There was appropriate children's furniture and accessible shelving for the children in each room stocked with a large and varied supply of tabletop activities. Each room had defined relaxation areas with soft seating and display cases of age-appropriate books for the children to look through. The rooms had nature tables, the table in the hall room had the theme of hibernation, this had toy animals tucked away in large brown paper sacks. The staff member informed the inspector that children would regularly check by peeping into the bags to see if the animals were awake.

The service had developed and implemented a choice based, child led, play-based programme with an emphasis on developing children's independence. An overview of the curriculum /programme was displayed for parents on the entry door into the cabin. On the day, children were observed at free play in the cabin and enjoying the activity of playing with fresh playdough. In the hall a group activity called a 'visit to the barbers' was observed where children were paired off with one child wearing a crown of paper strips while the other child cut the strips.

The pre-school had access on a daily basis to a variety of outdoor play spaces within different aspects of the school grounds. There was a large Astroturf area used for ballgames and physical exercise. There was terraced area for digging and planting in the Spring. All areas were safely secured within the Mount Sion complex.

The daily routine was flexible and relaxed. The manager demonstrated to the inspector the children's learning journals in which photographs and some examples of the child's work was compiled and was made available to parents if they so choose throughout the year. The manager demonstrated that key observations were recorded on each child's wellbeing, development.

## 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:

Both buildings were safely secured with high fencing and large gates at the entrance to the Mount Sion complex ensuring that children had no access to the surrounding streets.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

However, both of the entry doors that gave access to the pre-school rooms had twist thumb locks that were at an accessible height to the children in the rooms. Therefore, children could open these doors and exit the service unsupervised on to the school complex grounds.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The registered provider stated in the response that locks have been fitted at a height which the children cannot reach at the entry/exit doors. Therefore, children can't exit the service unsupervised onto the school complex grounds.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

This response had photographic evidence of new locks fitted at a height that was inaccessible to children

### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was appropriate to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23 (safety) and met the requirements Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.