

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD061
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Name of Service:	Ursuline Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ursuline Convent, Ballytruckle Road, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 HW77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gail Ferguson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family agency Community Care Centre, 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

The service was founded by the Ursuline sisters in 1974 and has been operating privately since 1995 and under the current management since 2017. The premises is on the grounds of the Ursuline convent and schools in Waterford city. There are two pre-school rooms, toilet facilities for staff and children, a large storage room and an office with kitchenette facilities. The outdoor space provided around the building is used for outdoor play. The large hall in the primary school and the gardens within the grounds are also available for the pre-school service to use. The service presently offers the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) from 08:50hrs to 11:50hrs Monday to Friday for children aged 3 to 5 years of age.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and manager of the service and works directly with the children in the service on a daily basis. The service employs seven childcare workers to work directly with the children in the service.

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 on the day;

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 27 – Supervision.

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 and there was a named persons able to deputise if required.

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

Since the last inspection on the 15 June 2021 there were three new staff members employed to work with the children in the service.

(2)

(a) Six 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 staff member employed to work directly with the children in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months, police vetting certificates were available for this 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 for 3 staff at level 6, 1 staff member at level 7, and 3 staff at level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. The registered provider had a master's degree in child, family and community studies.

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

(3)
In the green room there were 12 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff members. In the blue room there were 15 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare 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) 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.

The arrival of the inspector coincided with an organised visit of the driver of a disability car. The user demonstrated to the children the dismounting of a mobility scooter from the car and explained the importance of visibility jackets. The most interesting aspect for the children seemed to be the opportunity to examine a concession parking sign/ ticket used for access to disability parking spaces. The registered provider informed the inspector that this visit was a follow on from a road safety theme covered with the children. The children were promptly and affectionately able to remember the first name of the traffic crossing guard (lollypop lady) at the exit to their school.

The pre-school operated between two rooms that were connected by an adjoining corridor. Both rooms were designed with identical zoning of areas of special interest. The registered provider explained that this helped the children to change rooms with ease if and when required.

The rooms were well resourced with a wide variety of toys and games on open shelves that the children had direct access to. Areas of interest included well stocked kitchen areas with pretend play cookers, sinks, dressers and an ample supply of kitchen play materials. There were soft relaxation areas with child sized sofas for children to rest in each room. Children were observed at free play in both rooms during the first part of the morning.

The registered provider prepared and provided the mid- morning snacks for the children every day. The snacks observed available to the children were bread sticks, pieces of fresh fruit and cheese with juice, water or milk to drink.

There was an air of excitement and anticipation amongst the children throughout the morning as the caterpillars that had hatched to butterflies in the cylindrical mesh container were ready for release. The staff brought the children to a section of the outdoor play area where there was trees/ greenery for this to happen. The children exuded excitement and some were visibly charmed when some butterflies settled on their arms or hands before taking flight.

After the children were collected the staff in each room were observed completing each child's observations on a digital application which was a new recording system for the service. The registered provider was busy compiling scrap books with accounts of the children's experiences, photographs and artwork for end of year celebrations with the parents and guardians.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. Four of the staff had more than 10 years experience working with this service.

The children were observed to have had unrestricted access to the toilet throughout the session. Staff escorted children individually to the sanitary area and stood and waited until the child was finished using the toilet and verbally checking with the child if they needed any assistance. After the child had finished in the toilet cubicle staff were observed encouraging hand washing.

There were established protocols with parents and guardians for children transitioning to and from the school. The pick-up arrangements were observed where parents and guardians waited at the fire door to each room while each child was handed over individually to their respective parent or guardian. In the mornings the registered provider informed the inspector that the parents and guardians came into the service and the childcare rooms to ensure that their child was settled into the session.

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The outdoor play space totally surrounded the building with interest areas dispersed to facilitate small clusters of child led play. The inspector observed that while children were outdoors the staff were strategically positioned around the building so as to have a line of view of each aspect of the outdoor play space.