

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD063
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Name of Service:	Passage East Childcare Initiative
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Address of Service:	Crooke Road, Passage East, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 D620
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Millea
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Service type:	Full day care, Part-time, Sessional.
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Date of Inspection:	30/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City.
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Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Passage East Childcare Initiative is a community service based in the village of Crooke in Co. Waterford. The building is purposely built on the grounds of the national school. There are two care rooms, staff and children's toilets and a nappy changing area. There is a secure outdoor area at side of the premises.

The service is registered to operate from 08:00 to 17:30, 5 days a week for 10 months of the year. The service caters for children aged between 2 years and 6 years old.

The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE).

Staffing

There were nine staff employed on the day of the inspection, including the person in charge and a student. The registered provider does not work directly with the children.

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, and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 16(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) – Record in Relation to Pre-School Service;

Regulation 17 – Information for Parents;

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) Record of Preschool 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 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)(b)(c)

The manager and room leaders remained on the premises during the inspection. The staff verbally described how one of the team leaders is the deputy person in charge if required. The line management structure was displayed on the notice board at the entrance of the building which included the names of the manager, the room leaders and the care staff.

(2)

The files of nine staff were reviewed.

(a)(b) Validated references were available for all nine staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all nine adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) On review of documents available, police vetting was required for two staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for more than six months. This police vetting was available on the day of inspection.

(4)
Eight staff members who worked directly with the children had a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or which had been deemed equivalent by the minister. The person in charge confirmed the student is completing their Level 5 qualification.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1)
There were 8 staff (including the student) working directly with 25 children attending the pre-school service on the morning of the inspection. The person in charge was available to provide support if required.

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was exceeded in the service throughout the inspection. At 10:10 the following was recorded:

ECCE room: 5 staff were working with 19 children aged between 3 years and 5 years old.

Toddler room: Three staff were working with 6 children aged between 2 years and 3 months and 3 years old.

(4)

On review of the staff roster, the staff attendance sheet and the children's attendance register the staff/child the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

A sample of the children's registration forms was reviewed. All forms were completed and included the details required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*

- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)

A copy of the staff details, the services parental handbook, the children's daily attendance books, staff rosters, and staff attendance records were reviewed. These documents demonstrated the records were kept up to date and are relevant to the service that is being offered.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

During a discussion and a review of the parental handbook, the person in charge described how, once a child is enrolled in the service, a copy of the parental handbook is emailed to them for their information. In addition, a hard copy of the parental handbook is available in the service for parents if required. A copy of the most recent newsletter (December 2024) was observed by the inspector.

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:

The premises were secured with high-level galvanised fencing with a gate at the entrance to prevent any unauthorised access or exit from the building. The gate is locked when the children are using the outdoor area. The children's outdoor space has three areas with a mixture of hard, matting and grass surfaces.

Infection Control:

Hand washing facilities include warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable hand towels. Children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet and playing outdoors.

Pedal bins were in place for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was observed to be administered on the day of the inspection. However, the inspector reviewed previous forms for the administration of medication signed by parents and the staff as per the services policy.

Safe Sleep:

Younger children were accommodated if they required a sleep in their room away from the main play area. Low beds were available if required.

Fire Safety:

During a discussion with staff, they competently described the evacuation procedure in case of a fire.

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 fire fighting 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 of monthly fire drills was available for review by the inspector. The most recent fire drill had been completed on the morning of the inspection.

(4)
The evacuation procedures were displayed prominently in each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) While it is acknowledged that a maintenance record for the firefighting equipment was available for review and the service was dated 24th September 2024, there was no record of maintenance for the smoke alarms, this was a previous non-compliance at the last inspection on 13th June 2024.

The registered provider submitted a copy of correspondence from the fire office dated 28th August 2024. This email outlined the service's requirement under the Fire Safety in Preschools document. However, the fire officer did acknowledge that the plans this year to extend the building would incorporate the upgrading of the firefighting equipment at that time.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that there are plans to extend the building this coming year. As part of this extension the fire-fighting equipment would be upgraded. Confirmation regarding the funding application is imminent. The registered provider has assured the Inspectorate that if the application is unsuccessful the equipment will be upgraded regardless.

Summary Comment

The action and plan submitted by the registered provider, will address the non-compliance identified on inspection and the implementation of these actions will be reviewed on the next inspection.