

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

|                                                                                                                                                                                                        |                                                        |    |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|----|--------|
| <b>N/ATUSLA Identifier:</b>                                                                                                                                                                            | TU2015WD068                                            |    |        |
| <b>Name of Service:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                | Sacred Heart Day Centre, HSE South                     |    |        |
| <b>Address of Service:</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | Lady Lane, Waterford, Co. Waterford                    |    |        |
| <b>Eircode:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                        | X91 KA43                                               |    |        |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>                                                                                                                                                                    | Catherine Delahunty                                    |    |        |
| <b>Service type:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                   | Sessional                                              |    |        |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>                                                                                                                                                                             | 19/09/2024                                             |    |        |
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b>                                                                                                                                                                      | AM                                                     | 12 | PM N/A |
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>                                                                                                                                                        | Waterford Community Services<br>Cork Road<br>Waterford |    |        |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                                                                                                                                                                       | M. Ryan                                                |    |        |
| <b>Title:</b>                                                                                                                                                                                          | Early Years Inspector.                                 |    |        |
| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>                                                                                                                                                                            |                                                        |    |        |
| 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

The Sacred Heart Centre is situated in the heart of Waterford City and is presently governed by the Health Services Executive (HSE). The premises was purpose built in 1974 to cater for children with learning and physical disabilities. The centre operates a morning preschool sessional service from 09:00hrs to 11:45hrs and an afternoon session from 12:30hrs to 15:15hrs. These sessions cater for children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The centre is open Monday to Friday from 08:00hrs to 17:00hrs. The service has three childcare rooms, a food preparation area, appropriately adapted sanitary accommodation, meeting rooms, a parent's room, and office space. There are a number of therapy rooms to facilitate all the requirements and needs of children attending. On the grounds of the premises there is a secure outdoor space with an appropriately adapted play area and equipment.

### Staffing

The service employs a manager and eight staff to work directly with the children. The service also employs a bus driver, contract cleaners and fulltime clerical officers.

### 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 inspection focused on the following areas:

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 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,
- (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.

(c) The Sacred Heart Centre was governed by the Health Services Executive (HSE) and in this respect there was a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)

The staff files of 10 employees were reviewed

(a) (b) There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff members file.

(c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána on file for all staff working in the service and all had been re-vetted in the last 3 years.

(d) Three of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months. Police vetting had been completed from the police authorities in these states.

(4)  
There was evidence that staff employed to work directly with the children held qualifications as registered nurses, level 5 to 8 on the National Qualification Framework in early childhood care and education, or held a qualification relevant to the work in the service. 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
On the day of inspection, the child staff ratios were at a minimum of one staff to two children, this exceeded the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(3)  
There were 12 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 7 childcare staff.

### 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, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(a) There were three rooms in operation on the morning of the inspection. The rooms were large with ample clear floor space. Each room had numerous south facing windows that captured the sunshine all day long and made the rooms naturally warm and cosy. Throughout the centre there was an abundant supply of resources, materials and specialised equipment. Equipment/materials and toys were observed to be kept to a minimum in the rooms. Resources were introduced to the rooms for therapeutic purposes on a planned basis as required.

There were specialised breakout rooms for example, one was well stocked with gross motor activities such as a horizontal roped bridge ladder, trampoline, large peanut roll balls, step-bridge stairs and a mechanical horse. This piece of equipment was observed being used with one-to-one supervision from a staff member who informed the inspector that the rocking sensation can be calming and regulating for the child. There were a number of therapy rooms to facilitate all the requirements and needs of children attending, these included: a water therapy room, and a ball pool room. Other resources for the rooms were supplies of soft foam platforms, push and pull toys and cause and effect toys. Stocks of sensory trays/boxes with mainly dry edible substances and flavourings such as garlic spices and herbs were available in each room.

(b) Children's rest needs were met in each room with supplies of stackable beds, mats, and large bean bags. There was a further breakout rest room with specialised beds.

(4)  
The outdoor environment was arranged to support maximum accessibility and opportunities for children to experience the outdoors. The area was safely secured with wire fencing and high walls separating the area from other inner-city dwellings. The surface was extensively covered with soft sponge matting and one large sycamore tree provided shade in the summer period.

All outdoor play equipment was customised for disability use. There was large wheelchair friendly rotation equipment and various sizes and height of pod and supported swings. A playhouse was a new addition since the last inspection. Picnic tables and seating were available positioned in such a way that children and staff could observe the activities.

## 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

Food was supplied by the service, that comprised of snacks two per session presented to the children on a 'taster plate' that were planned to give the children the experience of different textures tastes, flavours and smells. On the day of the inspection the platter observed had peaches, soft cheese, and a selection of dry cereals and crackers. The children were offered filtered water/juice and milk drinks. There was a healthy eating policy available on the day.

### 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*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

All nine of the ten staff available to work with the children in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid room on the premises that was adequately stocked and contained all the necessary equipment and supplies for a response to a first aid requirement.

### 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 recording system was provided to ensure a monthly record was maintained of fire drills as conducted and it was noted that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 27 August 2024.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced in October 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 5 September 2024.

(4)

The drawings and plans for the fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the notice board in the main lobby area of the centre. There were also plans for the fire evacuation procedures in each care room.