

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WD075
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	St. Declan's Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Waterstreet, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	X91 H295
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ciara Parris
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	22/05/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	N/A
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<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.

<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
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### Description of service

St. Declan's Pre-school open since 1995 is located on the premises of St. Declan's De La Salle national school in inner city Waterford. The premises is a stone landmark building in Waterford City, built as a school in 1853. The pre-school service operates from two rooms within the premises and shares the facilities and playgrounds with the national School. St Declan's Pre-school caters for children from 3 to 5 years of age. The service operates Monday to Friday and opening hours are 08:50hrs to 12:00hrs.

### Staffing

The principal of the school is the registered provider. The service employs a manager who is part of the staff compliment and three 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 safety of the child. The 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 25 - First aid.

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, 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 pre-school manager was the designated person in charge of both pre-school rooms and there was a named persons able to deputise if required.

(b) At all times during the inspection the pre-school manager and registered provider were on the premises.

(c) The service was governed by the board of management of St. Declan's De La Salle Boys National School the registered provider was the school principal who was a member of the board of management. There were clear details regarding the lines of accountability and responsibility for the staff working in the service.

Since the last inspection on the 28 September 2021 there was one new staff member employed to work with the children in the service

(2)

(a) Two written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff member 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) Not applicable as no staff employed to work in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months therefore police vetting certificates from outside the jurisdiction were not required.

(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 6 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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 pre-school room A there were 6 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 1 childcare staff member. In pre-school room B there were 18 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.

There were two sessional ECCE programmes in operation on the national school premises at the same time. Each pre-school room was located in different parts of the school building. One was known as room A, that could accommodate 12 of the younger children attending for the first year of the scheme. The second room, B, was a large hall like room where up to 22 children on the second year of the ECCE scheme could be accommodated.

On arrival at the service the inspector was warmly greeted and welcomed by the school principal, pre-school manager, staff and children. The atmosphere in both rooms was pleasant and friendly as reflected in the mission statement “At St Declan’s pre-school we endeavour to provide a safe, warm, and stimulating environment” and “strive to develop strong relationships with parents and St Declan’s school”. This was further evidenced by the caring interaction observed between the staff and the children throughout the inspection.

The manager informed the inspector that the service had developed and implemented a play-based programme with an emphasis on supporting children’s language development, numeracy as well as fostering children’s independence. The manager stated that “the child is central to our care” and spoke of the importance of consistency for children at this age. This was supported by the continuity of the same staff each day. Children were observed to be confident and comfortable in their surroundings, and staff responded promptly with praise and encouragement with phrases such as “well done” and “great boy”.

There was appropriate children’s furniture and accessible shelving for the children in each room stocked with a large and varied supplies of tabletop activities such as puzzles and blocks.

Both rooms were well-resourced and laid out with designated areas of interest, in particular the larger room had extensive areas such as a kitchen area, a construction area, small world play tables and a colourful nature display table. The staff were observed encouraging conversations with the children about their favourite play activity and assisting them to select the play area of their choice.

The large room had a generous comfortable defined space with soft seating and display cases of age-appropriate books for the children to look through. The children from both rooms were observed gathering in this area for the last round up of the day for story time.

The pre-school leader explained that daily time outdoors was an integral part of the programme which was facilitated on children’s arrival to the service while the school playground was not in use by the national school.

Therefore, children would spend the first hour outdoors on a daily basis and had access to a variety of outdoor play spaces within the different aspects of the school grounds. The pre-school had sole use to a school shelter that supported sand and water trays, a playhouse, ride on bikes and cars. This area had ground markings for childhood games such as hopscotch. A further designated grassed area on the premises was always available for physical activities and ball games.

A documented monthly theme-based programme was made available, the theme being flowers for the month of May. The manager informed the inspector that informal planning meetings took place every morning 15 minutes before the service opened as well as monthly staff meetings. The service kept folders of the children's work and photographs were given to parents at the end of the school year.

### 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)  
There was documentation available to verify that one staff member who had first aid responder training, FAR and was available at all times in the childcare setting during the operational hours of the service. A further two staff had current paediatric first aid training.

(2)  
(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box in each pre-school room.  
(b) The first aid boxes were suitably accessible and available.

## 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. All staff were suitably qualified, had extensive experience and the pre-school manager had over 30 years experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 main door and staff stood at different points with the children while each child was handed over individually to their respective parent or guardian.

In the case of pre-school B-room the staff escorted children as a group to the large sanitary area that was shared with the national school. Staff stood within hearing range while children used the toilets. In the event of a child needing to go to the toilet facilities in the interim period a staff member accompanied the child on request.

Pre-school A had a toilet facility adjacent to the room for the sole use of the children in that room.