

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH003		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Treasures Island Early Years Service		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	5 Arcadia Court, Athlone, Co. Westmeath		
<b>Eircode:</b>	N37 AY80		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Bernie Egan		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	21/04/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM NA
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C.O' Connor Hughes and L. Costello		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors		
<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 service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme from 09:05-12:05 and 12:35 -15:35 Monday to Friday. The age range of the children attending the service is two to six years of age.

The service is located in a purpose- built unit on the grounds of the registered provider's home in Athlone town. There is an outdoor play area adjacent to the service. A sheltered outdoor play area is located to the side of the service.

### Staffing

The registered provider and three adults were present and working directly with the children on the 21 April 2023.

### 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/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 inspectors wish 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
- (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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

- (a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
- (b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

*Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “)*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

## Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

The registered provider stated that one new adult was employed in the service since the last inspection on the 25 May 2021. The file of the new staff member was reviewed, and the following was noted;

(2)(a)

Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the new staff member.

(b)

Not applicable as references were available from a previous employer.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the new staff member.

(d)

Police vetting was not required in respect of the new staff member as they had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)  
The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of the new staff member.

(4)  
The new staff member held a major award at Level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)(b)  
Not applicable, no employee had signed a declaration on or before the 30<sup>th</sup> of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)  
One employee present was working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model.

## 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)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.

(3)  
There were twenty children attending the service supervised directly by the registered provider and three staff members.

## 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)  
In a sample of eleven records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

### 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;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

## 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

Information for parents was available in a parent handbook and shared with parents prior to their child commencing in the service in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

*A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

The designated person in charge ensured a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

### 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

The children were observed having great fun throughout the morning session as they moved freely from one play experience to the next in the pre-school room and in the outdoor play area. Children participated in small and large group work activities supported by staff as they enjoyed story time, free play and arts and crafts. Two children were observed to relax in the cosy rest area as they played together.

Children were encouraged to be independent dressing for outdoor play and assisted by staff if needed. Children washed their hands prior to snack time and after using the toilet. Healthy lunches were provided by parents consisting of crackers, fruit, yoghurts and sandwiches with water to drink. Staff sat with children eating their lunch promoting conversations and interactions with children. Children cleaned their recyclable cartons and placed them into the recycle bin after snack time. Good teamwork was noted amongst staff and smooth transitions were noted as children moved seamlessly from one activity to the another. Staff were positive and kind towards children speaking in soft language tones, maintaining eye contact with the child and using individual names.

The pre-school room was bright and colourful. A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Areas of defined interest included a home area, dress up with mirror, construction area and a nature table. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Toys and materials for inclusion and diversity were available to children. Children's artwork was displayed and included "the hungry caterpillar" and a child designed food pyramid.

The service operated in partnership with parents as a verbal handover was given to parents on collection. The service communicates with parents using a short messaging system (SMS). Children's artwork is sent home on a regular basis. The child's learning journey depicting their artwork and play activities is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The service had made links to the people in their community as they had invited the Gardai to talk with the children and the local national school had provided a uniform for children to familiarise themselves with transitioning to the local national school.

Children were observed to enjoy the multiple play experiences in the outdoor play area which included a sensory garden, a bug hotel, natural trees for climbing, a mud kitchen, toy building blocks, a wooden boat, a wooden car, a climbing frame, a large playhouse with slide and a basketball hoop. An enclosed sheltered area with a large sand pit and a free play area was available for children's use. A shed was available for storage of toys and equipment.

### 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 entrance to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

##### **Infection Control:**

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable.

Cleaning records were available and reviewed. Warm water and hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash handbasins was 35.6 degrees Celsius.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school room and sanitary accommodation.

Tissues were available to children to wipe their nose and maintain their personal hygiene.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after outdoor play.

Openable windows provided natural ventilation in the sanitary accommodation.

Lunches were stored correctly in a fridge in the pre-school room.

##### **Administration of Medication:**

No medication was administered at the time of the inspection. A temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. A health care plan was in place for a child with a defined medical condition.

##### **Fire Safety:**

The fire exits were unobstructed in the service. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

##### **Outing:**

Risk assessments were available in respect of outings undertaken by the service.

## 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)

An adult present was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available in the premises.

(2)(a)

The first aid box was available in accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

## 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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 28 March 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms were serviced on the February 2023 and the firefighting equipment was serviced in April 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

*A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.*

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.