

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH018		
Name of Service:	Rathganny Pre-school		
Address of Service:	Rathganny House, Multyfarnham, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 XE3F		
Name of Registered Provider:	Madeline O'Neill		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/09/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM 22
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes		
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		

Description of service

This full day care service provides full day care, part time and sessional places. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is from 0 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Thursday and 08:00 to 14:00 on a Friday. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in an adapted two storey premises on the grounds of the registered provider's home. The toddler room, junior pre-school room, school age room, sleep room, kitchen and an office are located on the ground floor. The senior pre-school room is located on the first floor. Two large outdoor play areas are situated at the rear of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is located in Multyfarnham, Co Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered provider and seven adults were working directly with children on the 16 September 2024.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of the child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler and Junior pre-school room.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C (2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstance in respect of the designated person in charge to the TUSLA registration office on the 30 July 2024. This change was approved.

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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were present for the inspection.

Ten staff files were reviewed including the registered provider.

The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers and from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members and the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and the registered provider.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or an equivalent deemed by the Minister.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were forty-two children attending the service supervised directly by eight adults including the registered provider.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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 review of twelve child enrolment 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 was available for parents in the service in respect of Regulation 16(1) (a) to (g) in a parent handbook.

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

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

(1)(a)

Junior pre-school room and Toddler room.

Children were observed to be happy and content engaging in the various play opportunities supported by staff.

Children transitioned seamlessly from the indoor and outdoor play environments. Extended outdoor play opportunities were offered to children due to the good weather.

Staff were positive towards children using individual names, conversing with children, singing songs and giving positive praise on completion of activities. Children settled into the toddler room on a phased basis. Staff supported children giving hugs and cuddles as needed.

Good communication was observed during nappy changing between the adult and child. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as required. Children used the toilet and washed their hands before snacks supported by staff. Children attending the toddler room were given the opportunity to rest and sleep as needed in a separate sleep room.

Partnership with parents is maintained through a parent handbook, a verbal handover on collection, the use of a short messages system (SMS) and one to one telephone calls as needed. Children's artwork was displayed in the windows of the toddler and pre-school room for parents to view.

The layout of the toddler and junior pre-school rooms meet the learning needs of the children as age and stage play materials were accessible to children. Interest areas included home area, construction area, dress up and rest area with a selection of reading books.

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 19 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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room was provided for children to rest and sleep adjacent to the toddler room. Three cots were available in the sleep room. Rest areas were noted in the toddler and junior pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

Children were observed enjoying free play in the outdoor play areas located at the rear of the service. The play areas were safe and secure. Tarmac, natural grass and mulch surfaces were noted. Areas were divided for younger and older children to play in. Toys and equipment included a climbing frame with steps and slides, a messy kitchen, trikes and bikes, tyre climbing area. Themed based wooden playhouses were in place to support imaginative play including a shop, post office, police station and a bus scoile.

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

The service provides meals for the children attending the service on a full day care basis.

A menu plan was available in the service.

Parents provide healthy snacks for the morning and afternoon. Snacks included sandwiches, cheese, fruit with water to drink.

At approximately 13:00 the registered provider served the main meal of spaghetti bolognese to the children with water to drink.

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 door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service is accessed through a bell to the reception area of the service. The inspector 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:

Children washed their hands before snacks and meals.

The nappy changing procedure was carried out correctly in line with the service's nappy changing policy.

All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the toddler and junior pre-school rooms and the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 31.2 degrees Celsius.

Windows were open for natural ventilation. Mechanical ventilation was working in the sanitary accommodation next to the toddler room.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log.

The environmental temperature of the sleep room was recorded at 20 degrees Celsius.

The service has their own thermometer, records indicated that the room temperature was recorded on a daily basis.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the service. A fire assembly point was noted to the back of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated the service does not undertake outings.

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)
Seven adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in the main reception area 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

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

(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 15 August 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and the firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in October 2023 and February 2024 respectively.

(2)

The record was open to inspection by (a)(b)(c).

(4)

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

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. The expiry date noted was the 27 March 2025.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider furnished the required information on inspection.