

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WH030
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mullingar Academy of Childcare & Education
-------------------------	--

<b>Address of Service:</b>	105, Ballinderry Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	N91 P862
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Kathleen Egan
-------------------------------------	---------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/08/2023
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	26	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<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>	K. Murphy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

The age range of children that the service is registered to accommodate is 0 to 6 years of age. The full day care service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in an adapted two storey residential building. One pre-school room is located on the first floor and two pre-school rooms are located on the ground floor. A sleep room, a kitchen and an office are provided. Two small outdoor play areas attached to pre-school rooms are located to the front of the service. A large outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. Additional sanitary accommodation, nappy changing facilities and a staff room are located in a standalone building to the rear of the service in the outdoor area. Onsite parking and set down facilities are provided. The service is in an urban setting in a residential area in the town of Mullingar, County Westmeath.

### Staffing

There were eight adults present on 23 August 2023 including the supervisor and seven childcare practitioners. The registered provider who provides a support role arrived at the service shortly after the inspection had commenced and remained on site for the duration of the inspection and the closing meeting.

### 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the co-operation of the registered provider, supervisor, 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

(1)

In January 2023, a change of circumstances was submitted relating to a proposed change to the maximum registered capacity of the service and the number of staff in the service. This change in circumstance were approved by the TUSLA registration office.

### 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.*

*(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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

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

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

Fourteen staff files were reviewed and, the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the staff members.

(b)

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

(c)

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

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of three staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

Vetting procedures were carried out by the registered provider before staff were employed in the service.

(4)

All staff members working with children held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed to be equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 twenty-six children attending the service supervised directly by eight adults.

(8)(a)

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

### 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 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)

The daily menu plan reflected the provision of food for breakfast and dinner by the service with morning and afternoon snacks or meals provided by the parents.

The main meal was prepared fresh by the supervisor and consisted of a shepherd's pie, containing beef, vegetables and mashed potato was provided to children at 12:00. Water and milk were offered to children.

Children enjoyed the selection of food provided during the inspection. Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during dinner time.

Children went to the toilet independently and were supervised and assisted where necessary. Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting. Regular nappy changes were carried out. The nappy changing practices observed adhered to the displayed procedure.

The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities.

Staff worked in partnership with parents. In the baby room a daily record sheet recorded information relating to each child's day. This information was provided to the parents as part of a verbal handover on the child's day at collection time.

Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available for all children indoors and outdoors.

Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters. Children's artwork was noted and paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open-ended art materials were in plentiful supply.

### 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.*

*(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 and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room equipped with three standard cots was located adjacent to the playroom. Low level beds were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep. Soft furnishings were in place to support rest and relaxation.

(3)(a)

Two small outdoor play areas were attached to the front of the baby room and the playroom which allowed for extended play to the outdoors. These areas were secured by perimeter fencing.

A large outdoor play area was attached to the rear of the service. A sheltered area was in place to support year-round outdoor play. A large artificial grass area and a small discovery garden with trees and shrubs was in place. The outdoor area was equipped with a variety of bikes, trikes, and climb/slide units. The outdoor area was secured by a wall, fence, trees and shrubs.

### 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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector completed the visitor log on arrival.

##### Infection Control:

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

Warm running water, liquid soap and hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Openable windows and mechanical ventilation were provided in the sanitary accommodation.

A fridge was available for the storage of non-perishable goods in the pre-school room. The fridge temperatures were recorded daily. Soothers for use by children were individually labelled.

##### Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

##### Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Sleeping babies were physically checked every ten minutes by a staff member.

##### Fire Safety:

A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service.

##### Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings were not conducted on a regular basis from the service. A completed risk assessment was available for review in respect of an outing conducted earlier in the 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)

Four staff members were qualified in first aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location on the ground and first floor.

(b)

A fully equipped first aid box was accessible to children.

### 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 written record for the completed fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 21 July 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in March 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced in August 2022.

(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.