

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH076
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Name of Service:	Precious Angels Pre-School
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Address of Service:	65 Raithin Eoghan, Ashe Road, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Corbett, Valja Mc Cabe
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C. O'Connor Hughes
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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
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Description of service

The service is registered as a sessional service operating on a Monday to Friday basis for 38 weeks. Two independent providers operate the service. The Early Years' Service is located in a two-storey purpose-built premises. Two pre-school rooms, two art rooms, two fun rooms, a kitchen and a general-purpose room are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of Mullingar town, County Westmeath.

Staffing

Both registered providers and four staff members were present and working directly with children on the 19 April 2024. Closing meetings were attended by the registered providers.

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.

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 co-operation of the registered providers, 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.*

(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.

(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 person in charge and a designated person in charge were available as required.

(b)

The registered providers were present throughout the inspection.

Six files were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written references were available from either a past employer or a source other than a previous employer in respect of all staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of all staff members.

The service 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 employed in the service held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A)
Two staff members present were working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 maintained during the inspection.

(3)
There were thirty-six children attending the service supervised directly by six adults.

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

19(1)(a)

Marian's Room (ECCE)

Children enjoyed the morning play activities and were observed to move freely from the pre-school room to the fun room and art room during the inspection. Children were actively engaged in free play in the fun room supported by staff. A small group of children enjoyed artwork in the pre-school room while their peers had enjoyed physical play in the outdoor play area. Turn taking was observed as the groups swapped to the other activity after a period of time. Story time was enjoyed by children as they were encouraged to participate and ask questions.

Children's independence was encouraged as they dressed for outdoor play, went to the toilet and washed their hands before snack time supervised by staff.

A staff member prepared a snack consisting of banana, cucumber, crackers and cheese for the children to eat. Children were observed to self-serve their choice of drink supervised by staff. Children enjoyed their snack sitting at tables and conversing with each other.

Children were content with their carers. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Individual care plans were in place for children requiring additional support and supervision. Staff used a gentle approach of redirection for managing behaviour in a positive caring manner.

Partnership with parents was noted as staff members gave a verbal handover on collection. The staff member stated a short messaging system is used to update parents of upcoming events and information. A photo album of the children's play activities and copy book are given to parents at the end of the pre-school term.

Valja's Room (ECCE)

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Healthy eating was well established and encouraged. The service provided the mid-morning snack to the children. A variety of fresh fruit, dairy products, crackers, and cold meats was noted for the mid-morning snack.

Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during snack time. Potable water was available to the children to self-serve during the session. Children used the toilet independently and regular hand washing was observed.

The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities. Individual care plans were in place for children requiring additional support and supervision.

The service operated in partnership with parents and guardians. Information and photographs relating to the children's activities are shared with parents by a closed social media platform. A verbal handover on the child's day was given to the parents and guardians at collection time.

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. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection.

The children rotated in small groups through the designated art room painting pictures of "planet earth" as part of documented themed activities for the month of April. The children were observed enjoying free play and gross motor activities on the various bikes and trikes in the outdoor play area.

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.

(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)

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

(b)

Soft furnishings in the pre-school rooms supported rest and relaxation for the children in attendance.

(4)

An outdoor play area with tarmac and absorbent surface areas was attached to the rear of the service and could be accessed directly from the pre-school rooms. A high-level perimeter wooden fence secured the area. The outdoor area was equipped with a small plastic playhouse and climb /slide units. Bikes and trikes were available for use and stored in a secure shed. Additional play resources suitable for outdoor activities were stored in the pre-school rooms.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Each of the registered providers had an assigned pre-school room, fun room and art room.

Pre-school rooms were laid out with books, jigsaws, bricks, blocks and play equipment designed to support the development of fine motor skills. Low level table and chairs were available for children.

Fun rooms were laid out with a variety of age and stage appropriate toys and play materials to support imaginative play including play tents, dolls, prams, construction areas, small world and home areas.

Art rooms were laid out with age and stage appropriate tables, chairs and art easels. Protective clothing covers were available, artwork was displayed, a demonstration board was in place and a variety of paint, paper and craft materials to support the children’s creative activities.

Materials were accessible to children on low level open shelving and drawer units. Personal belongings and bags were stored individually for each child.

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 two entrance doors to the service were secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The gates to the front of the service are closed by a staff member when children are dropped off to the service.

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. Warm water, liquid soap and an electric hand dryer were available in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature of the water at the wash hand basins was recorded at 33 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. No medication was given at the time of the inspection.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exit doors were in place and were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Outing:

Risk assessments and checklists were in place in respect of outings carried out from 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)
Two staff members 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 an accessible and conspicuous location in the premises.

(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 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 monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 21 March 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced on the 15 November 2023. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 16 February 2024.

(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. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.