

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015WW124

Name of Service: Tinahely Community Playgroup Ltd

Address of Service: School Road, Tinahely, Co. Wicklow

Eircode: Y14 DE43

Name of Registered Provider: Siofra Gallagher

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 13/05/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	54	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke and J. Mayock
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 N/A

Description of service

Tinahely Community playgroup was first opened in 2010 and is a community owned childcare service. The service is located adjacent to the local National School in the townlands of Tinahely Co. Wicklow. It is a non-profit service that is registered to provide care and education for children aged between one years and six years of age.

The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.30 hrs and 18.30 hrs (including a sessional Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE) service for 38 weeks of the year).

A school age service is also provided.

The premises is a purpose built, two storey building with five pre-school rooms, all with their own sanitary accommodation. There is also an office, staff room, laundry room, staff sanitary area, storage room and kitchen.

There is a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises, which the children have access to on a daily basis.

Staffing

The pre-school is a community-based service and is under the control of a board of management. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. There are currently twelve adults employed in the service. This includes a person in charge, deputy manager and full-time chef.

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 cooperation of the 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

Following a discussion with the person in charge and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that twelve adults work in the service, this included the full-time chef. These files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The person in charge was present and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of twelve adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for twelve adults.

(d)

International police vetting was available for one adult working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Eleven staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher 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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were ten adults employed to work directly with 56 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

The person in charge ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The person in charge ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The person in charge ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

The person in charge ensured that there were appropriate and suitable care practices in place within the pre-school.

Children were given the opportunity for free play during the morning, and children's participation was encouraged in all activities throughout the day.

All children had the opportunity to access the outdoor area for long periods during their day.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service. One to one attention was given to a child when required, in addition, support was given to children so that they remained included in activities.

A strong ethos of teamwork was evident from observing how staff members worked together.

The relationships between the adults and children reflected a sense of belonging, inclusion, connectedness and diversity.

There was a suitable cosy area in each pre-school room, with rugs, soft furnishings, cushions and books for children to use should they require it during their day.

Children's parents are spoken to on an individual basis at collection time.

Parents are encouraged to make direct contact with the pre-school, should they have any concerns or issues.

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 door to the service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors to the service.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit route in each pre-school room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- There was a sanitary area located in each pre-school room. There was warm running water at 30°C, liquid soap and paper towels available.
- A foot pedal bin was available in each sanitary area and in the pre-school rooms for the safe disposal of used paper towels and other waste matter.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- Hand washing by the adults and children was observed before snacks, after using the toilet and outdoor play.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Low level beds were stacked on top of one another with the children's fitted sheets in place. This meant that the legs of the bed on top were resting on the sheet of the bed below., risking soiling the sheet the child would be sleeping on. This is not adequate for infection control purposes.
2. On the day of inspection, the nappy changing practices were not seen to be effective for infection control purposes. One staff member failed to remove their gloves until after a nappy change was completed and failed to complete cleaning the nappy changing area before engaging in another task in the care room. A second staff member did not wash their hands before or after the nappy change, and did not wash the hands of the child before returning them to their care room.

The Nappy Changing Procedure was posted in a conspicuous place in each sanitary area and the Nappy Changing Procedure was robust to ensure good infection control practices.

Both non-compliances were noted on the last inspection and the CAPA response failed to prevent the non-compliances from re-occurring.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Beds are stacked as normal but no longer have fitted sheets in place. Each bed has the sheet and blanket resting on top of the bed. The room will only be prepared when it is empty and beds can be laid flat on the ground. At this point fitted sheets will be attached and blankets laid on top of each individual bed. A meeting was held and all staff were informed of this new practice. Each staff member signed the memo. Staff will be reminded of this practice at our monthly staff meetings.

2. Nappy changing policy was printed off and placed above the nappy changing station to remind staff of the procedures. Staff attended a meeting which addressed this situation, and each staff member signed the memo. Gloves and aprons and all cleaning products are always available for use. A meeting was held to remind staff of the nappy changing policy and the importance of hygiene throughout the process. Staff will be reminded of this practice at our monthly staff meetings.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of stacked beds and the new storing of blankets, plus minutes of a staff meeting, signed by staff members, revising infection control practices were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions should address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation Regulation 23 Infection control points 1 & 2. This will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The person in charge ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a)(i-iv)

The person in charge ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.

(b)

The person in charge had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school.

(4)

The person in charge was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it relates.

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 trained in FAR (First Aid Response) was available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within each pre-school room.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times

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.

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

(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)

There was a record of fire drills having taken place in the pre-school service. The last recorded fire drill was the 12th of March 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke detectors on the premises dated 21st of January 2025.

(2)(c)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of what procedures should be followed in the event of an emergency, displayed in each pre-school room.