

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW134
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Name of Service:	Dunlavin Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Church Road, c/o Jonathan Swift National School, Dunlavin, Co. Wicklow
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Lambe
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	N/A
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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
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	N/A
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Description of service

This community based, non-profit, pre-school service was first established in 2003. The service is run out of three pre-school rooms located within the grounds of the local National school in the townland of Dunlavin Co. Wicklow.

The service consists of one prefabricated building and a room that is located across the outdoor area in the main school building. The prefabricated building contains of two pre-school rooms, sanitary accommodation, an office, a kitchen and a toilet with disability access. The pre-school room located in the school has its own separate sanitary accommodation and toilet facilities for the staff.

Staffing

The registered provider is the manager of this non-profit community service and works in the service full time. Ten adults are employed in the service and nine staff members were present on the day of inspection. There were three adults from the Community Employment scheme present on the day.

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 inspector wished 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.

(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

Following a conversation with the registered provider it was confirmed that ten adults and three Community Employees are currently working in the pre-school service. All thirteen staff files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated written references were available in respect of thirteen adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of thirteen adults.

(d)

Police vetting was available for two adults who had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

Ten adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A)

Three adults were employed 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)

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

(3)

The correct adult/child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were nine adults present with forty-one children.

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),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g) & (i),

The registered provider 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 registered provider ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

Non-Compliance Information

The following particulars were not recorded accurately on the registration form for children attending the service.

(1)(b)

The date on which the child first attended the service,

(h)

A record of immunisations.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b) & (h)

All enrolment forms have been updated with a start date for each child photo attached

All enrolment forms now include a section requesting the child's immunisation passport or a letter from their doctor with details of vaccinations received before the child can commence preschool. This has also been confirmed with the local medical centre. All enrolment forms will be checked before the child starts.

Enrolment forms are more up to date with a section requesting confirmation of vaccinations

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b) & (h)

Photographic evidence of updated enrolment forms with start date completed and a section for vaccinations a child has received were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 15 (1)(b) & (h) and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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;
- (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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a),(h),(i),(j) & (k)

The registered provider had a record in writing of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The above records were available for inspection, on the premises by 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 registered provider 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 the children had the opportunity to access the outdoor area for long periods during their day. There are three separate outdoor areas for the children to use.

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 were suitable cosy areas in the care rooms 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 door to the service was locked on arrival of the inspector, ensuring children cannot leave the service unsupervised and unauthorised access to the service cannot occur.
- The emergency exits doors were unobstructed.
- Storage was available for the children's belongings.
- Cleaning materials and equipment were out of the reach of the children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the storage of food.
- A cleaning schedule for toys and equipment was available.
- The sanitary accommodations were well stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and paper hand towels.
- There was warm water available in the sanitary areas as well as foot pedal bins for the safe disposal of used paper towels.
- Hand washing by children and adults was observed before snack time.
- Cleaning of tables and floors was observed during the morning.

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 registered provider ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a),(i-iv)

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

(b)

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

(4)

The registered provider 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)
All qualified adults in the service were trained in FAR (First Aid Response) and available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within each building and an additional box was located in the kitchen area.

(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 20 October 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke detectors on the premises dated 3 September 2025 and 7 August 2025 respectively.

(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 and other prominent areas throughout the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the two premises were assessed by the inspector and the following was found

(a)

The two premises were found to be of a sound and stable structure,

(b)

That both premises were found to be safe and secure,

(c)

Both premises were kept adequately lit, heated and well ventilated, with natural ventilation.

(d)

Both premises were visibly clean, well maintained and repaired, with daily and monthly cleaning schedules available for review.

(e)

Both premises were equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities, to meet the needs of the children and adults in the service.