

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WW231
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Park Academy Childcare Nature Kindergarten
-------------------------	--

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Pigwood, Kilruddery Estate & Gardens, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	A98 W9F2
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Dearbhala Cox Giffin
-------------------------------------	----------------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
----------------------	----------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	27/05/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	25	PM	16
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Bourke and R. Phillips
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	NA
---------------------------------	----

### Description of service

This fully outdoor day care facility was first established in 2014. It is located within the ground of a privately owned country estate, located in Bray Co. Wicklow. It is a private full day care service that is registered to provide care and education to pre-school children aged between two years and six years of age.

The service is open Monday to Friday from 07.30am to 6.00pm. They also participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

The service consists of an enclosed five-acre forested area, with a suitable sanitary area for both children and staff and small wooden building which contains a kitchen/staff room.

There is a permanent yurt for the children to use in adverse weather conditions.

### Staffing

There were six adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

### 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 manager and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that seven adults are employed in the service, these files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The service had a manager and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The manager 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 seven adults.

(c)

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

(d)

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

(4)

Seven staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

## 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 six adults employed to work directly with 25 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)  
The manager 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 manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection 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 manager ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Children partake in imaginative free play for a large proportion of the day.

The forest has been developed to have a wide variety of different areas to support the emergent interests of the children and gives the opportunity for challenging and safe risk play. Children have free choice in what they want to participate in during their morning.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. One to one attention was given to a child if it was required.

The staff know all the children by name and a strong sense of teamwork was evident within the kindergarten, this was observed by how adults and children interacted with each other.

Despite the service being fully outdoors, there are suitable areas where children can rest during their day.

Children who wish to sleep, can avail of low-level beds which are set up in the kitchen/staff room.

There is an area in the kindergarten where the children's belongings are stored. Children must have at least three full sets of clothes to change into, so they do not become cold from being in the outdoors for their day.

Four toilets and five wash hand basins are provided for children's use in the sanitary area with thermostatically controlled hot water.

Hand washing by the children was observed before the children started eating their lunch.

There was fresh drinking water available to the children throughout their day.

The Kindergarten provide all the food, main meals, snacks and drinks for the children attending the service throughout the day. The meals and snacks are in accordance with the Healthy Eating Policy of the service.

Parents are spoken to directly at the end of each day and in addition there is an online app which parents have access to.

### 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 manager ensured that each child attending the service was checked in and checked out on each day of attendance.

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

The manager ensured that no person other than the above list of people were allowed access to the pre-school service.

(b)

A record in writing was kept of any person having had access to the pre-school service from the above list.

(4)

The record in writing of the above information referred to in paragraph (3)(b) was retained for a period of one year from which it related to.

### 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)  
The manager ensured that there were adults trained in FAR (first aid response) and were available to the children at all times during their day.

(2)(a)  
A suitably equipped first aid box and a portable first aid bag were located in an accessible place within the kindergarten setting.

(b)  
A first aid box and first aid bag were 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)  
There was a record of fire drills having taken place in the kindergarten on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill was the 23<sup>rd</sup> of April 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke detectors on the premises dated 16<sup>th</sup> of July 2024 and August 2024 respectively.

(2)(c)

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