

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX012
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Name of Service:	Blackstairs Community Playschool
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Address of Service:	Community Hall, Kildealy, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y21 XF66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Conan Doyle
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate. Ely hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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).

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Description of service

Blackstairs Community Playschool is a community-based preschool situated in the village of Killealy. It is managed by a board of management. The service provides sessional and full day care service for children from 2 to 6 years of age. It operates from 7.50am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday for 46 weeks per year and is also registered to provide a school age service. The service is operated from a premises attached to the community centre. The rooms allocated to the preschool service have been renovated to meet the needs of the service. The service consists of two large playrooms, toilets, and nappy changing facilities and has access to the community playground and an enclosed playground directly beside the service.

Staffing

The service employed a total of 14 staff including the manager. There was one staff member employed under a community employment scheme who was also available to assist the qualified staff. Certificates of qualification were available for all staff members working directly with the preschool children. All staff working directly with the preschool children held an award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 10 Policies and procedures,

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 21 Equipment and materials,

Regulation 22 Food and Drink,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).

Regulation 28 Insurance,

Regulation 29 Premises.

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 cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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*

(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

(1)(a)(b)

The manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection. There was a person employed in the service available to deputise as required.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 14 staff and 1 student employed in the service. All written and validated references were available on file for staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff.

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(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with the children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

There were policies and procedures in place in the service specified in Schedule 5 of these regulations. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on healthy eating and the policy on the administration of medication in the service.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the morning of the inspection.

(2)

At 11.00am

There were 35 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 8 staff.

At 1.40pm

There were 11 children aged from 2 to 6 years the care of 5 staff.

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There was also a student available in the service on the day of inspection to assist across the rooms if required.

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.*

Compliance Information

There was a registration form available in respect of each child enrolled in the service. A sample of 10 forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

There was an information handbook for parents whose children were attending the service. The service had provided parents with information as required under the regulation, on the curriculum, the hours of operation, the funding schemes available and contact details. There was also information on the facilities available within the service, information on the day-to-day requirements and running of the service: healthy eating, medication management, behaviour management, complaints, fire safety and first aid.

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

Both preschool rooms were resourced with a range of play equipment for the fun and learning of the children attending the service.

Preschool room 1 had been developed for the younger children in the service. There was a supply of paints, paper and crayons. The staff had displayed original artwork completed by the children of bright yellow high visibility jackets. There was a large dolls house with miniature equipment for the children to play with. A shop area with a till and a counter. The children had access to a quiet room just off the main classroom which had a large couch where they could sit and look at the extensive choice of story books available to them.

Preschool room 2 was set up to cater for the older children attending the service. This was a large room which provided space for the children to play and enjoy free play in the service. There was a construction bench with miniature tools, a birthday wall with all the children's photos and birth dates. There was a supply of toys in labelled boxes arranged on shelves which were easily accessible to the children.

The children had access to two outdoor areas. There were a large community playground and an enclosed area to the rear of the service which was for the exclusive use of the children attending the service. This area had a large sand pit which could be covered, a climbing frame and ride on equipment for children to play on.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service has a healthy eating policy. Parents provided all meals and snacks for the children. Staff who spoke to the inspector said breakfast was offered to the children on arrival to the service if required. All food provided by parents was stored in a fridge in the service. Children were observed having their morning snack. Children were served a variety of food such as sandwiches, fruit and yogurts.

Non-Compliance Information

1.
The inspector observed the hot meal served to the children at 1.35pm. Of the 11 children who were served a hot meal the inspector noted many of the meals did not meet the national standards required. For example, there was processed pizza, waffles with sausages, chicken nuggets and processed potato pieces, and plain pasta with bread and ketchup.
National standards for preschools require services to provide a hot meal to children attending on a full day care basis. This meal should consist of food from three food groups. For example, rice / potato / pasta, with a vegetable /salad, and a protein such as meat, fish, eggs, or beans.
2.
Children were also observed drinking large quantities of juice which was contrary to the healthy eating policy which asks parents not to include fruit juices in their children's lunches.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.
Following the inspection the findings in relation to the provision of hot meals were shared with parents by e mail. Information was also on provided on suggestions in relation to providing a variety of alternative hot meals for the children based on national health promotion literature which was also shared with parents.
2.
The provision of juice in the service was discussed with parents, and the healthy eating policy was shared with parents to remind them that juice is discouraged ion the service.

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Supporting documentation submitted

1.
A copy of the E mail and health promotional literature shared with parents was received by the inspector.
2.
A copy of the healthy eating policy in place in the service was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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:

Access to the service was gained through the front door by ringing a bell. The door remained secure for the duration of the inspection. All cleaning agents were placed out of reach of the children. The outdoor areas were safe, suitable and secure.

Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean. Staff were observed to be vigilant in supporting children to wash their hands before snacks, after using the toilet and after messy play.

Administration of medication

The service had an administration of medication policy. A sample of 10 administration of medication documents were reviewed by the inspector. All parent consents were signed, and all documents were signed by 2 staff members in line with the service's policy.

Accident and Incidents

The service had a policy on the management of accidents and incidents in the service. The inspector reviewed copies of 10 accident and incident reports in the service. The documents reviewed were in line with the service policy and were signed by the parents of the children to confirm they had been informed of the incidents in the service.

Outings

The service has a policy in place to facilitate outings.

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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)

There was evidence that there were seven staff trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service, which was sufficient to cover across the rota in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position to the staff on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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 fire fighting 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)

There was a template in place to record any fire drill that takes place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out in March 2026.

(b)

There was a record available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service This maintenance was last carried out in September 2025. The smoke alarm was last serviced in January 2026.

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(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

The couches in preschool rooms 2 were worn, torn and needed to be replaced.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The coaches have been replaced and there are new couches in their place.

Supporting documentation submitted

A receipt for the purchase of the new couches was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.