

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015WX012
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Blackstairs Community Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Community Hall, Kiltealy, Enniscorthy, Co. Wexford
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<b>Eircode:</b>	Y21 XF66
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michael Weafer
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/09/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	19	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Backstairs Community Playschool is community based early years service situated in the village of Kiltealy. It is managed by a board of management. The service provides a sessional service for children from 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates a morning session from 9.20am to 1.00pm Monday to Friday for 38 weeks per year. The service is also registered to provide a school age service. The service is operated from a premises attached to the community center. The rooms allocated to the early years service have been renovated to meet the needs of the service. The service consists of two large playrooms, toilets, and nappy changing facilities. The service has access to the community playground and an enclosed playground directly beside the service.

### Staffing

The service employed a total of five 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 early years children. All staff held at least 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

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

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a),

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).

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.

### 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 designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were six staff employed in the service, including the manager. All six staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)

There were 10 written and validated references available on file from past employers.

(b)

There were 2 written and validated references available on file from reputable sources.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all six staff members.

(d)

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

(4)

All staff working directly with the early years children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

## 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)

There was at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the early years children.

(3)

At 10.30am there were 19 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff. There was one staff member employed under a community employment scheme who was available to assist the qualified staff on the day of inspection. The manager was also available for the duration of the inspection and was available to assist across the rooms as required. The minimum ratio of adults to children was not exceeded for the duration of the inspection.

### 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

(1)(a)

The manager ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including playing together in the outdoor areas, doing tabletop activities, and having stories read to them in the room just beside the main early years room designated for rest and relaxation.

The service had the use of two secure outdoor play areas. Children were observed enjoying free play in the outdoor area adjacent to the service on the morning of the inspection. Staff facilitated children to enjoy a variety of activities. For example, digging in the large sand pit, using their ride on toys, and climbing on their jungle gym. Children were well supported and supervised.

Staff were observed constantly engaged with the children. There was lots of conversation about siblings who were at home and some who had started school. Staff who spoke to the inspector said they liked to facilitate as much outdoor play as possible for the enjoyment of the children. The second outdoor area was a large community playground situated a short walk across the carpark from the service. This area was a large well-resourced play area. There was a zip line, swings, a large jungle gym, picnic benches, a tunnel, and a large, enclosed basketball court.

The early years rooms were well resourced with play equipment. The areas of interest in preschool 1 such as the construction area, the home corner, the shop area, were resourced with good quality toys and equipment. Many of the children were from farming backgrounds and this was reflected in the variety of farm equipment available for them to play with. For example, tractors, diggers, and trucks. The materials were easily accessible and visible

to the children on low level shelves. There was comfortable seating for the children and a selection of books for the children to look at in the rest area.

Staff demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. Staff were observed while giving the children their mid-morning snack. Staff sat with the children and encouraged children who were shy to share their news with their friends. There was a relaxed and calm atmosphere observed in the service on the day of inspection. For example, many of the children were settling in and were well supported by the five staff present on the day of inspection. Minor disagreements between children were managed promptly by the staff who were constantly engaged with the children.

### 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

The manager had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service.

##### General safety:

Access to the service was gained through the front door directly beside the office. There was a call bell system in place where parents rang the bell to gain access to the service. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service through the glass door. The outdoor play areas were safe, suitable and secure.

##### Infection control:

The service appeared to be clean on the day of inspection. Cleaning templates were available throughout the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years rooms and toilet areas. There were large fridges available in each of the early years rooms to store the perishable food provided by the parents for the children. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and foot operated pedal bins.

## 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 a person trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises which was available to the children attending the early years 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)

There was a template in place in the service to record any fire drill that takes place in the service. The last fire drill taken place in the service was recorded in June 2023.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm was last serviced in September 2023.

(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