

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX029
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Name of Service:	Clonard Holy Family Preschool
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Address of Service:	Clonard Community Preschool, Clonard, Wexford
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Eircode:	Y35 YV0F
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Name of Registered Provider:	Isaac Desmond Robinson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 AE10
Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Clonard Holy Family Preschool is located in Clonard, which is on the outskirts of Wexford town. The service operates from a multi-use premises in Clonard Community Centre. It is registered to accommodate 38 pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years. The service operates for 38 weeks of the year and it delivers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The morning session operates from 9.15am to 12.15pm and the afternoon session operates from 1pm to 4pm. There are two care rooms which have adjoining sanitary facilities. The children have access to two outdoor areas: the main outdoor area is accessible from the two care rooms and a second outdoor area is provided within the centre of premises.

Staffing

The service employs ten adults in total, the nine staff members who worked directly with the children had at a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or higher. The registered provider does not work in the service. There are two students on work placement within the service.

On the day of inspection, there were eight adults and one student on work placement in the service.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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 wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) The deputy designated person in charge of the service was present in the service.*
- (b) The deputy designated person was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.*

(2) The staff files of ten employees in the service and two students were reviewed. The following was available:

- (a)(b) There were twenty-two validated references were available for the twelve adults.*

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- (c) Twelve Garda vetting disclosures were available for review. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Through a review of documentation, it was determined that police vetting was required for two adults which was available.

(3) Recruitment and vetting procedures were carried out in advance of appointment for all staff and students.

(4) The nine adults working directly with the children held 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.

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)(3)

There was a total of 8 adults working with 35 children aged 2 to 6 years. In the Caterpillar room, there were 4 adults working with 16 children and in the Butterfly room there were 4 adults working with 19 children.

There was an adequate number of adults working in the service to support and care for the children. The deputy person in charge was also available to provide support to the care rooms if required.

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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:

(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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) A roster was on display and it was reflective of the staff members present and the hours worked.
- (j) The administration of medication records were reviewed. The records were completed with the key details including the name of the child, date, dosage and parental signature. In discussion with staff members, they were familiar with the service's procedures to record medication which was administered. This was reflective of the service's own administration of medication policy.
- (k) Accident and/or incident records were reviewed and were appropriately completed. Each record contained the required details including time, date, details, actions taken and evidence of communication with the child's parent / guardian. Through discussion, staff members described the procedures as set out in the service's accident and incident policy of how to record an accident and/or incident.

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

The interactions between the children and staff members were respectful, responsive and child centred. The staff members spoke in warm and encouraging tones with the children. For example, the Butterfly group were waiting in the hallway to go outside for their Easter egg hunt. A child in the Caterpillar room said to the staff member that they were loud and put their hands on their ears. The staff member who was sitting beside the child warmly smiled them and looked in the direction of the hallway. They affirmed what the child had said and explained how the children were going on their Easter egg hunt. The child looked to the staff member for assurance, which they

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provided through a reassuring smile. The responsiveness of the staff members to the children's needs was observed throughout the inspection.

The staff members were observed to encourage children's participation and recognise children's achievements at each instance. For example, the children in the Butterfly were making Easter themed chocolate buns. The staff members were encouraging the children to wash their hands before the activity. One child asked the staff member why they needed to wash their hands. The staff member warmly responded to the child's question, knelt down and asked the child's question to a number of children who were close by. The children excitedly responded with their ideas which included to get rid of germs and stop to stop you from getting sick. During this time, the staff member warmly reassured the child through warm body language. When the children shared their understanding of the importance of handwashing, the child who asked the initial question independently went to the sink and proceeded to wash their hands. Providing children with an opportunity to explore their thinking and share their own experiences positively contributes to a child-centred environment. Children's participation was further supported through staff members being familiar and responsive to individual needs. This familiarity actively contributed to the calmness of the interactions in the care rooms. Staff members were observed to engage with the children as a group and one-to-one using various communication tools, such as sign language and visual displays. This supported communication with children which in-turn positively impacted on their participation in the environment. For example, the rubbish and recycling bins in the Caterpillar room were yellow and green with the numbers 1 and 2 on them. During snack time, a child in the Caterpillar room was observed to look to the staff member and indicated that they wanted to put a wrapper into the bin. The staff member reassured the child by smiling at them, responding verbally and gesturing with their hands to put it into the green bin with the number 2 on it. The child stood momentarily and put the wrapper into the bin with 2 on it. The staff member positively recognised the child's achievement verbally and through sign language. The child was observed to turn and proudly smile at the staff member. These responsive relationships and child-centred tools positively support children's independence and confidence.

Staff members explained to the inspector the relationships which were made with the children's families and the local community. Visually, this was evident within each of the care rooms through photographs of the children and their families. Children engaged with these throughout the inspection, pointing at their own photographs or looking at other family photographs and re-calling the names of people in them. There were photographs of parents and family members of the children who visited the service to explain their jobs which included roles such

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as a nurse, defence forces, vet and bread delivery. Children's engagement with the community was also on display. This included a visit to the fire station and the shop which were within walking distance of the service. The staff members explained how these relationships with families and communities supported children and their understanding of the world around them. This was observed during the inspection whereby a staff member, while sitting with the children at snack time in the Caterpillar room, spoke about their dog. The children responded with their own experiences including their own pets at home, and the staff member was overheard to encourage the children to share the names of their pets. The staff member explained that the children's interest in animals and pets emerged through the visit from the vet. Fostering children's knowing of the world around them was also noted in the outdoor area where staff members explained how the children planted bulbs including daffodils. They explained how the children enjoyed watching them grow. They showed the inspector flowers which the children would plant in the garden after the easter holidays.

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

The children had access to a range of age-appropriate equipment and materials in the Caterpillar and Butterfly room. Both care rooms provided the children with opportunities for imaginative play with dress up clothes, play kitchens, small world animals and arts/craft materials. The layout of these rooms supported children's independence through low level shelving, and pictorial labelling of boxes containing materials.

The outdoor area provided children with many opportunities to play and extend their learning. The layout of the area was intentional providing areas of interest for the children.

- Children were provided equipment and materials to encourage whole body movement including a wooden structure with steps up to it and a slide to come back down and open space to run.
- The children were provided with a play kitchen furnished with real life kitchen equipment including varying size pots, pans, spoons and kitchen utensils. The children were provided with sand to further extend their play in the kitchen. Children were observed to pour, spoon and sprinkle the sand between the pots and pans.

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- Open-ended play was provided through the addition of materials by staff, including a water tray. Some children washed their dolls, while other children searched the water for sea-life creatures which the staff members had provided.
- There was a raised area with blackboards available for the children to draw with chalk.
- Interactions with the natural world were provided through a number of planters with spring time bulbs, a Butterfly tree and a bug hotel.

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) A person trained in first aid including First Aid Responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced through discussion with the staff and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.
- (2) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises and were out of the reach of the children.