

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CW002		
Name of Service:	Ballinkillen Pre School		
Address of Service:	Ballinkillen, Bagenalstown, Co. Carlow		
Eircode:	R21 ED29		
Name of Registered Provider:	Suzanne Coughlan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	07/12/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM N/A
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Ballinkillen Preschool provides a sessional service to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is operated from the village community hall in Ballinkillen County Carlow and provides an Early Years Care and Education programme (ECCE) to children between the hours of 09:00 to 12:30 hours. The service operates from a large room which has been developed to cater for preschool children. The service has toilets, a kitchen and access to a safe and secure outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service. All staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above 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 inspection 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)(b),

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection in relation to Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child. It is acknowledged that the registered provider responded promptly with immediate action plans to address the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23.

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 three staff employed in the service, including the registered provider. All three files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)(b)

There was one written and validated reference available on file from a past employer.

- (c)
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all three staff members.
- (d)
Police vetting was not required as no staff members had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
There was evidence on file that all staff working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

1.
There were four written references on file for two staff members that were not validated. All written references are required to be validated prior to staff starting work in a service.
2.
There was one reference which had been received over the phone. All references for staff are required to be validated prior to staff starting work in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The four written references are now validated and available on file in the service. The registered provider will ensure all staff will have written and validated references available on file in the service prior to commencing employment in the service going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the four written and validated references were received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

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

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 were an adequate number of staff working directly with children attending the service.

(3)

At 10:30 hours there were 3 staff working directly with 16 children aged from 2 to 6 years of age.

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 registered provider 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 activities during the inspection including eating together, playing together and enjoying tabletop activities. Interactions between children were well managed by the staff who were caring for them. Children were observed having fun. Staff helped them to crunch up large pieces of paper to make snowballs. Then a large piece of material like a parachute was taken out by the staff. Children were then encouraged to throw the snowballs on the parachute to pretend it was snowing. Children were encouraged to share and take turns with each other. Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example washing their hands after using the toilet, and putting their lunch boxes away after having their snack.

During activities staff used opportunities to extend children’s learning by engaging them in topics the children showed an interest in. For example, children had started to discuss what Santa would bring. Staff encouraged the children to consider all their options.

The service had a large safe and secure outdoor area situated at the side of the main building. The area consisted of play equipment such as a slide and a jungle gym for the children to play on.

The preschool room was well resourced with toys, equipment and materials which were easily accessible and visible to the children on open child height shelves. There was a wall of family photographs displayed on the walls of the classrooms. These photographs were of the children’s immediate families and also other people who were important to the children such as grandparents and childminders. There were areas of interest developed in the rooms. Of particular note was the home corner which had a pretend ironing board and clothes rail. There was a rest area for the children which consisted of a child sized couch, a soft floor mat and library books for the children to enjoy.

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 gate. The gate was secured. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service as there was a clear view of people approaching from the car park through the glass door. The outdoor play area was safe, suitable, and secure. There was a boundary wall built at the roadside of the playground since the last inspection. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves that were inaccessible to children.

Infection control:

The service appeared clean on the day of inspection. There were fridges available to store the food provided by the parents for the children. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the classroom was recorded at 33°C on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

1.

The door from the community centre was not secured on arrival to the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the provider on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the registered provider responded promptly with a plan to address the security of the service in consultation with the fire officer.

2.

The water flowing from the taps in the toilets was recorded at 48°C on the day of inspection. This posed a risk of scalding to the children attending the service. This non-compliance was included in the immediate action notice issued to the registered provider on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the registered provider responded promptly with a plan to address the issue of the excessively hot water flowing from the taps in the toilets.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.

The registered provider consulted with the fire officer. A contractor was employed to carry out work to the door to ensure the service was secure while also compliant with the fire officer's recommendations.

2.

The thermostat has been repaired. Staff have added the checking of the water temperature daily to their risk assessment when opening the service in the morning.

Supporting documentation submitted

1.

A report of work completed on the door was received by the inspector.

2.

No evidence received.

Summary Comment

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

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 a first aid responder course available to children attending the service.

(2) A suitably equipped first aid box was available.

(a) It was stored safely in a conspicuous position in the preschool service.

(b) The first aid box was always available to children.

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 drills that takes place in the service. The last fire drill carried out in the service was recorded in November 2023.

(4)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(b)

There was no record available of the annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

A record of the annual maintenance of the fire equipment dated July 2023 was received by the inspector. The smoke alarm in the service was last serviced in September 2023.

Summary Comment

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