

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016TY004
Name of Service:	Rainbow St. Mary's
Address of Service:	Convent Primary School, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Eircode:	E45 DX78
Name of Registered Provider:	Cordelia Cormack
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
Date of Inspection:	12/03/2024
No of pre-school children:	AM 20 PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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

This service was established in 2016 to provide care and education to children aged 2 – 6 years old. The service is registered as sessional and part time, operating Monday to Friday 7.30am – 12.15pm for 38 weeks of the year. On the day of inspection all of the children attended for the three-hour sessional service that operated from 9am to 12pm and was funded under the early childhood care and education scheme. All of the children were in their second year of the scheme and were preparing to go to primary school in September 2024. Children who attended on a part time or full day care basis moved to one of the Rainbow sister services in the town, in Dromin Road or Tyone at 12pm. A registered school aged care service is also provided from 2pm – 4.30pm.

The service is operated from a room in a national school in the town of Nenagh in North Tipperary. The room was accessible from an enclosed courtyard at the side of the large two-storey premises, which was only used by staff, children, parents and visitors wishing to access the service. There was a second door in the room which gave access to the main body of the school.

The children had access to their room, a sanitary accommodation area and use of the school grounds for outdoor play. The enclosed courtyard was covered and used for outdoor play during the year.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service but is available to call on if needed. The service manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection. There were a total of five staff employed in the service including one member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). Four staff, including the manager, worked directly with the children at any one time.

All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

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 9(2)(4), (11(1)(3)(8), 20(1)(2), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

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 registered provider, 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

(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

The staff files of all five members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(2)(a) There were written, validated, past employer references available in respect of the five members of staff.

(b) There were written, validated references from a source other than a past employer available in respect of two members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant records were kept on file. Garda vetting was renewed on a three-yearly basis, in line with best practice.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of staff who had lived outside the state. Records were maintained on file.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6, 7 or 8 on the national qualifications framework or a letter from the Minister stating that their qualifications had been assessed and met the requirements for working in an early years 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.

(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.

(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) There were 4 staff working directly with the 20 children aged between 3 and 6 years old who were present in the service on the day of inspection. All of the children attended the service for the morning session, with 8 children leaving at 12pm and the other 12 children moving to one of the other Rainbow's services for the afternoon.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1 to 5 for the morning session, which was greater than the minimum requirement of 1 to 11.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present at all times while the service was in operation.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016 shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to their room within the school and to the school grounds for outdoor play. The room was large and well laid out in a number of designated interest areas. The children enjoyed freedom of movement to the areas they wanted to play in throughout the morning between planned activities such as circle time, story time and lunchtime.

The children went outside to play each morning between 9.30am and 10am, when the school yard was not in use by the school children.

(b) There was a cosy area in the room where the children could relax during the day. The children who attended on a part-time or full day care basis moved to different premises for the afternoon where there were sleep facilities. Most of the children were aged 4 years old and older and rarely required a daytime sleep.

(2)(a) The children had daily access to the school grounds for outdoor play. This was a large space at the front of the school enclosed by walls and gates. The gates were secured before the area was used by the children. The ground surface was tarmacadam that was painted with numbers, shapes and games. There was a large covered shed along one side where the children could play in all weathers. The walls were covered with bright murals. There was also a covered bike storage area that provided a second sheltered play space.

The enclosed courtyard, which the children used as their access point to their room, had a roof covering most of the space and artificial grass covering the tarmacadam surface. This space was used as an outdoor room and play space by the children during most of the term. It was not in use on the day of inspection as the staff said it needed to be cleaned up after the winter, which was planned in the near future.

A playground was under development on the grounds which the children will have access to when it is completed.

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 room was well equipped with furniture, toys and materials for use by the children and staff in the service. There were child and adult sized chairs and tables that were used for dining, art and tabletop activities such as board games, playdough, manipulative play, construction and puzzles. There was a long counter along one wall with a sink unit and cupboards underneath where paints, paper, plates, cutlery and other resources were stored. Shelving units and play equipment such as the shop and play kitchen were used to divide the room and create interest areas which included the home corner, small world areas, floor play area and library area. Furniture was moved around according to the activities engaged in, for example, the tables were moved back and the chairs placed in a large circle during circle time and story time.

Each of the interest areas was well resourced with toys and accessories to support the children’s play and exploration.

An interactive whiteboard was used effectively for story time. The story was displayed on the white board where it was clearly visible to the children. The children could go up and touch the pictures when asked to point out something they had heard mentioned in the story about a tadpole who grew into a frog.

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 had a healthy eating policy. Most foods eaten by the children were provided by their parents. Supplementary foods such as bread to make toast were available in the service if a child was hungry. Children brought their own drink bottles of water or squash that were available to them throughout the morning on a table where they could easily access them when they wanted a drink. Bottles were refilled with water when empty. Milk was also available if a child preferred that option. A fridge was available for the storage of perishable foods. Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: rice cakes, sandwiches, bread rolls, crackers, cheese, corn cakes, toast, fromage frais, yoghurts and fruit (bananas, strawberries, apples, grapes, mandarins, cucumber and raisins). Some children brought additional drinks such as smoothies and fruit juice to consume as part of their lunch. Staff said that none of the children had food allergies but when food, such as birthday cakes, were brought into the service for celebrations, they requested that these be nut free.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There was a printed register of the children into which the staff recorded the arrival and departure times of each child on a daily basis.

(3)(a) The person in charge contacted the registered provider prior to admitting any visitor to the service.

(b) Any visitors to the service completed a visitor sign-in form before entry to the service.

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) Two members of staff present in the service on the day of inspection held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available on the windowsill in the room, where it could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the 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 written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 13 February 2024.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the building. The annual service of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was carried out in April 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the notice board beside the entrance door to the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover for the service valid until 27 March 2024.