

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017MH505
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Name of Service:	St. Stephen's Pre-School
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Address of Service:	St. Stephen's National School, Johnstown, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 AE03
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Name of Registered Provider:	Frank Burke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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

St Stephens Pre-school is situated on the grounds of St Stephens National School in two prefabricated buildings. The operating hours are 08.45am- 11.45am in the morning and afternoon session 12.15pm to 15.15pm, Monday to Friday. The age range catered for is 2 years 8 months to 6 years. An outdoor area is available to the right of the service and accessed through a secured gate.

Staffing

Eight staff members are employed in the service, one of whom was providing AIM support. A student was present on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work in the service but is available to staff when required.

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 announced 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.

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 manager, 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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Eight staff files and one student file was reviewed.

(a) & (b) Eighteen validated written references were available for the staff members and for the student.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or above.
- (6) One staff member was employed under the access and inclusion model.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct;
- In the **Caterpillar Room** two adults cared for 15 children attending a sessional service (aged between 2 years 8 months to 4 years).
- In the **Butterfly Room** two adults cared for 21 children attending a sessional service (aged between 2 years and 8 months and 4 years). A student was also present in the room.
- The manager arrived at service during the inspection at approximately 11 am.

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
- (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

Basic needs of Infants and Children

- A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents.
- The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings.
- An appropriate daily routine was in place which allocate times for child – initiated play and learning and adult planned and facilitated activities.
- At circle time and throughout the session staff introduced children to each other and made every opportunity to assist children settle into the service.
- Snack time was a very social event with animated conversations and discussions. Staff encouraged children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.
- All children had the opportunity for outdoor play during the morning session.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- Relationships between staff and the children were very supportive, warm, and positive. Staff sat at the child's level while assisting them with activities. Staff were overheard praising children for sharing toys and supported children to find positive solutions to minor disputes.
- The staff members engaged in play activities with the children with lots of enthusiasm and laughter observed. The children appeared confident and relaxed in their environment. Language development was facilitated through reading, songs, and conversation.

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 care rooms had defined and supported areas of interest which included library areas beside rest areas, wooden puzzles and building blocks, home area, art and craft materials and montessori equipment. The rooms were bright and airy. Children’s artwork was displayed on the walls in a way that respects and acknowledges all the children’s efforts.

The outdoor area was available to the side of the building with grass area and covered area available. The grass area was not used on the day of inspection. The outdoor area equipment included a mud kitchen, ring throwing game, train tracks, dolls and buggies, ride on toys, cars, trucks, and wooden benches. .

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:

The following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed with walls and gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

The inspector viewed the following infection control measures undertaken in the service to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children.

- The service was visibly clean and up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display.
- Foot-operated pedal waste bins were available in the service which facilitated the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The children's packed lunches, supplied from home, were refrigerated on arrival to the service which reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for all staff members. However, six of the eight vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Garda vetting has been obtained for the six staff members.

Garda vetting will be renewed every three years.

Supporting documentation submitted

Garda vetting received by the Inspectorate for all staff members.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider addresses the non compliance in Regulation 23.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

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

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

Non-Compliance Information

(1) Staff did not have up to date First Aid Responders training, training certificates available had expired.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A staff member has been enrolled on FAR training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of enrolment has been submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has submitted evidence on the 15th November that a staff member has now completed FAR training. This has addressed the non compliance in Regulation 25.

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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises

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 a valid insurance certificate for 44 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2025.