

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018LS505		
Name of Service:	Maples 2		
Address of Service:	21 Borris Little, Portlaoise, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R32 XR2C		
Name of Registered Provider:	Monica Delaney		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	13/01/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

The service is registered as a sessional service catering for up to 18 children. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service is part of a multiple operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey premise located on the ground of the home of the registered provider. One pre-school room and a kitchenette are provided. An outdoor area is attached to the rear and front of the premises. The service is situated in a residential area in the town of Portlaoise, County Laois.

Staffing

The designated person in charge and one staff member were present during the inspection. The registered provider is not rostered to work directly with children in the service. The registered provider provides a support and administrative role off site but is available in the event of the designated person in charge being absent.

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.

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 co-operation 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.*

(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)

The designated person in charge was available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present during the inspection. The registered provider is available to provide cover in the absence of the designated person in charge.

Three staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available from past employers or a source other than a previous employer in respect of two staff files reviewed. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children as part of the adult to child ratio held qualifications at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(3)

There were fourteen children attending the service supervised directly by two adults.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)
In a review of all seventeen-child records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.
Information relating to (g) was available in respect of fourteen child records.
Information relating to (h) was available in respect of four child records.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
Information relating to (g) was not available in respect of three child records.
Information relating to (h) was not available in respect of thirteen child records.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

The registered provider stated in the response that a check system has now been put in place to ensure that all required records are completed by parents. (Update records included).

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Children used the toilet independently and regular hand washing was supervised by a staff member.

Staff were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities.

Children were encouraged to be independent in caring for their belongings. Children were observed to enjoy free play, choosing their own activity to participate in and supervised by staff. Low level tables and chairs and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children. Children's artwork and themed decorations were noted. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for the children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific activities. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals, and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters. Parents and guardians received a verbal handover from a staff member at the end of the morning session. The designated person in charge stated that child development observations are emailed to parents and guardians on a monthly basis and learning journals are available to review throughout the year.

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)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Soft furnishings consisting of a vinyl sofa and ring cushions provided suitable relaxation facilities in the pre-school room.

(2)(a)

Two small outdoor play areas were located to the front and rear of the service. The play areas were equipped covered activity play trays and a selection of bikes and trikes.

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 entrance door to the pre-school service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Daily safety checklists were in place.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation.

Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school room and the sanitary accommodation.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Any medication to be administered to a pre-school child could be recorded electronically.

Fire Safety:

A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

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)

One adult was qualified in first aid response (FAR) and available during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in a prominent location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school 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 record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 20 December 2024

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in January 2024. The smoke alarms were serviced in November 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.