

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018MO503
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Name of Service:	Quay Before, After School & Pre School
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Address of Service:	Creggs Road, Ballina, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F26 YX95
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eileen Blakeney
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	14/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Quay Before, After School and Pre School is operated by a voluntary committee and is located on the grounds of a primary school in Ballina, County Mayo. The service is registered to provide parttime and sessional services for children aged from two to six years of age between the hours of 09:00-14:00 hours. The service is registered to provide school aged childcare services.

Staffing

There are nine staff working in the service. One of the staff members is employed through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The registered provider does not work directly 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 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) There was a named designated person in charge in the service and a named person to deputise as required in her absence.
 - (b) The designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises throughout the period of the unannounced inspection.
- (2)
- (a),(b),(c) and (d)
- The inspector was informed by the designated person in charge that that there were nine staff in the service at the time of the inspection. It was confirmed that the vetting documentation for five staff had been reviewed during previous inspection in the service and were found to be compliant under this regulation. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available for the four staff new to the service since the last inspection of the 12 November 2021:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers including their most recent employer for the three staff. One written validated reference from a past employer for one staff.
 - (b) One written validated reference from a source other than a past employer for one staff member.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all four staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting documentation for one new staff member.
- (4)
- The qualifications for the two staff new to the service who worked directly with preschool children met the requirements of this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) The international police vetting on file for one staff was not the International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) required for this staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2) (d) The service advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member applied for an International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC) on the day of the inspection. It is now part of the service's staff recruitment process that if a staff member has been in the UK for 6 months or more that the service ensures that an ICPC is applied for, prior to commencing employment in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of an International Child Protection Certificate.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted by the service. The non-compliance identified on inspection under Regulation 9(2)(d) has been addressed.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof 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) An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service. There were 6 adults working directly with 38 children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service on the morning of the inspection. One child left the service at 9.52hours. A seventh staff member was present in the service in the afternoon and available to provide break cover with 13 children remaining in the service for parttime care provision.

(2) and (3)

The minimum required ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service. The adult: child ratios for sessional services provided in the service of the day were as follows;

- 3 adults cared for 17 children in the Senior playroom.
- 3 adults cared for 21 children in the Junior playroom with 1 child leaving the service at 9.52hours.

Part-time services were provided for 13 children between 12:00 hours to 14:00 hours. The minimum required adult to child ratios of 1:6 for children aged between two to three years of age and 1:8 for children aged between three and six years of age were maintained during the provision of the part-time service.

(8)(a)

At least two adults were always present during service operation hours as found on the day and demonstrated in the sample of attendance records reviewed and discussion with the staff members.

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) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a random sample of children's records selected across both playrooms from the children currently enrolled in the service. The required written information in relation to the children was made available to the inspector.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Written records were kept of the following information in the service:

(a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of each staff member in staff vetting files.

The service's Statement of purpose and function contained:

(b) Information on the service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to.

(c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service.

(d) The service's type of care or programme.

(e) The facilities available in the service.

(f) The service's hours of opening and fees were displayed the entrance hallway.

(g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were kept in a service policy folder.

(h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded daily on an electronic application by staff.

(i) A detailed staff roster was available for inspection and staff attendance was recorded by the staff on an electronic application.

(j) Electronic forms were available to record any medication administered to a child with parental consent while attending the service.

(k) The staff showed the inspector how electronic accident/incident report forms were completed containing details of accidents, injuries or incidents involving children attending the service. These forms were signed by parents following viewing.

(3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were made available to the inspector in the service by the staff on request.

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:

On the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service, the main keypad-controlled entrance door was found to be secured. This door was secured during the inspection when people were not entering or leaving the building. The inspector was admitted to the service by the designated person in charge following production of identification documentation. There were safety gates at the doors leading from the kitchen to the playrooms allowing the staff to restrict access by the children to these areas. The gates to the enclosed outdoor play area were observed to be secured when the children were playing outside supervised by staff members. The toys and play equipment were kept in good condition and were suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them. Cleaning products used in the playrooms were stored in high shelving out of reach of children. Thick padding was in place on the metal posts of the outdoor shelter beside the building to reduce the risk of accidental injury to a child.

Infection Control:

The service was observed to be clean with detailed cleaning records kept electronically by staff. Foot pedal operated bins were available in the playroom and sanitary areas for the disposal of waste. Aprons and gloves were available to staff in the nappy changing area to wear during nappies changes when required. Boxes of tissues were accessible by the children at low levels should they need to use them to clean their noses. The staff prompted and supervised the children washing their hands using warm water, liquid soap and drying them with paper towels at appropriate times during the inspection. Refrigerators were provided in the playrooms and used to store the children's food provided from home on arrival to the service.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication observed to be administered to a child in the service during the inspection. The staff showed awareness through discussion with the inspector of the procedures in relation to the correct storage and administration of medications.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes and doors were observed to be unobstructed during the inspection.

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) Seven members of staff had undertaken First Aid Response (FAR) training with certificates available for inspection due to expire ranging from the 2 September 2024 to the 12 January 2026.
- (2) (a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored at a high level in an easily accessible, conspicuous location in the entrance hallway.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if a child required first aid treatment in 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 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) Electronic records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff with the last fire drill recorded as having been undertaken on the 23 February 2024.
- (b) Certificates of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms/fire detection system were made available by the designated person in charge for inspection.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the playrooms.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The required adult: child ratios were adhered to in the service. Staff members supervised the children appropriately mainly by sight during the inspection. The children who were able to use the toilet by themselves were out of sight of the staff when using the toilet but remained within earshot if help was needed to be given. When playing outdoors the children were observed by sight by the staff who positioned themselves strategically in the outdoor spaces to be able to see them in accordance with the service’s policy on outdoor play. The staff sat with the children to supervise them when they ate their lunches in the playrooms.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A certificate of insurance was displayed in the service's entrance hallway for the maximum of 44 children registered in the service with an expiry date of the 31 December 2024.