

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019LK001		
Name of Service:	The Old School ABC		
Address of Service:	Bohermore, Ballysimon, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V94 EF60		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Sheehy		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	20/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM 9
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan		
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 Old School ABC is a full day pre-school service located in a purposely designed and modified old schoolhouse building on the grounds of Bohermore National School in Ballysimon, Co. Limerick. It operates a sessional pre-school service each morning, Monday to Friday. A parttime service is offered each afternoon for preschool children who wish to stay up to 1.45pm. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon. The service operates from 2 purposely designed, well-resourced pre-school rooms. There are sanitary facilities located directly next to the room. A sensory room is located next door to the old schoolhouse. Outdoor children have access to the large school playground. A sheltered outdoor classroom and a large natural garden are accessible to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider is the principal of the adjacent primary school. There is a designated person in charge appointed to manage the preschool service. Three additional staff are also employed to work at the school. Each staff working at the service holds an appropriate qualification 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.

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) The registered provider had appointed a designated person in charge to manage the service. There was a named person who could deputise if required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were written references, from past employers, available in respect of all staff employed at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source such as schools and colleges were provided.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all staff members. All vetting certificates were dated within the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was on file for 1 staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were at all times above the required adult child ratio available at the service.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 19 preschool children and 5 staff in attendance for the morning sessional service. For the afternoon parttime service there were 9 preschool children and 3 staff in attendance. The adult/child ratio was correct.

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 sample of 10 children's registration forms were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of these children.
- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service.
 - (d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian 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 received by the children were documented on 8 of the 10 registration forms.
 - (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) A designated space to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service was not provided on the children's registration forms that were sampled and reviewed.
- (h) Record of immunisations received by the children was not completed on 2 of the 10 registration forms that were sampled and reviewed

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The registration forms for all preschool children have been amended and the provision to record the date each child ceases to attend the service has been included.

(h) The record of the immunisations received by all children has been updated on all the relevant forms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the above amended documents were forwarded to the Office of the Early years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications, and experience of the persons in charge.
 - (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility 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) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10 and was emailed to parents when they enrolled their child at the service.
 - (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
 - (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child was not filled out on the day of the inspection. The children were not signed in as they arrived on the morning of the inspection.
- (i) Details of staff rosters were not completed on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (h) Attendance records are completed each day as children arrive and leave the premises.
- (i) Staff rosters are maintained on a weekly basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of these attendance records and staff rosters were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and parents were advised to provide only nutritious snacks for break time. A second meal was offered by the service to children who stayed each day until 1.45pm. Drinking water was accessible to the children at all times with each child having easy access to their own bottle of water throughout the day.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets located adjacent to the preschool room 1. Children were supervised at all times when using these facilities.

A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Outdoor warm clothing and wellingtons were available for all, as children spend much of their time outside each day at the service.

Tissues and wipes were always accessible to the children and all waste was disposed of properly in lidded bins. Soft furnishings were available to promote a rest area and low-level beds were accessible if a child needed to rest or sleep.

Children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment both indoors and outdoors. A sheltered outdoor area was available in a large outdoor classroom. A natural garden was also accessible to the children where planting and gardening took place. A sensory room was available where children could spend time if needed in this quiet calm space away from active play areas.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated from 2 well-designed preschool rooms. Preschool room 1 was a large spacious area which had a range of developmentally appropriate, well-resourced interest areas such as a construction area, imagination play area, an art/craft area, a rest and relaxation area with soft furnishings and a library area. All the play materials and equipment were organised to be visible and easily accessible to the children on open low-level shelving. Higher shelving in the room provided storage space for play materials which were rotated when needed. Child sized chairs and tables were used by the children for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtimes.

To promote a sense of independence and organisation clearly labelled coat hooks and storage areas were provided for each child's personal belongings. Lots of children's art and craft work created for Easter were visibly displayed around the room. Preschool room 2 was a smaller space and facilitated children working alone or smaller group activities.

Outdoors children had access to the school playground, and to a garden at the rear of the premises. The availability of an outdoor sheltered classroom facilitated children to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions. The equipment and materials outside supported children's exploration and provided learning opportunities exclusive to the outdoors such as nature lessons and gardening. The school yard provided space for the use of ride on bicycles, trikes and scooters and ball sports.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

A nappy changing unit was located in Preschool room 2. A timber partition partially obscured this area of the room but did not afford the necessary privacy for the children during nappy changing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The nappy changing unit has been removed from Preschool Room 2.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the changes made were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

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 front door of the facility was secured, and a staff member was required to allow access to all people entering the building.

All emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed.

There was no blind or curtain cords hanging freely.

All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners. No broken toys were noted on the premises or in the outdoor play areas.

No flexes or cables were located within reach of children.

Infection Control:

There was a good standard of operational hygiene noted in the facility.

A detailed infection control policy was in place. All tabletops and high contact touch surfaces were cleaned on a regular basis throughout the day.

In the event a child had an infectious illness, exclusion periods were in place and were communicated to all parents.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

There was no hand washing facility available next to the nappy changing unit in Preschool room 2. To ensure adequate infection control, nappy changing facilities must be located next to handwashing facilities.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

Nappy changing has been relocated to the disability access bathroom, which has hand washing facilities adjacent. Work is ongoing in building a waist high unit to facilitate ease of access for both the staff and the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Details of the above changes were submitted to the Office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non compliances identified have been adequately addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors appeared safe and secured. The gate to enter and leave the school grounds had a restrictive lock in place.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults in the service.