

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020LS001		
Name of Service:	Barrowhouse Pre-school		
Address of Service:	Shanganamore community hall, Shanganamore, Barrowhouse, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R14E981		
Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan Lacey		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	10/03/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	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 & R. Flynn		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located in a community building. One pre-school room is provided. An outdoor area is attached to the rear of the premises. The service is situated in the village of Barrowhouse, County Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider and three staff members were present during the inspection.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 registered provider and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was present throughout the inspection.

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

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from either a past employer or a source other than a previous employer in respect of the files reviewed.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the files reviewed. In respect of three of the four files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with 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 available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 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 exceeded during the inspection.

(3)

There were sixteen children attending the service supervised directly by four adults.

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;

(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 service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) (h (i) and (k).

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. Conversations and interactions between children and staff were observed during snack time.

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. The service operated in partnership with parents and guardians. An electronic application is used to provide updates along with themed events and activities. A verbal handover on the child's day was given to the parents and guardians at collection time.

The staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Staff members were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection.

The pre-school room was laid out with areas of interest that incorporated real life play items and materials to stimulate each area of the child's development. Low level tables, chairs and low-level shelving with equipment were available to all 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 chosen activities. A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children.

Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor

skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters. Children’s artwork was noted and paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open-ended art materials were in plentiful supply.

In the outdoor play area children enjoyed interacting with the staff who engaged and supported the children in their play. A bubble blowing activity was observed. Wellington boots were available to the children and stored in a covered unit outside to support opportunities for all year outdoor play.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

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

(b)

Soft furnishings including a child sized sofa and cushions in the pre-school room supported rest and relaxation for the children in attendance.

(4)

The outdoor play area could be accessed directly from the pre-school room by means of a gated and fenced pathway. An artificial grass surface area was in place on a section of the outdoor play area. Wooden fences and a

concrete wall secured the perimeter of the outdoor play area. A wooden fence divided the service from the adjacent National School playground. The outdoor play area was equipped with a selection of bikes and trikes, a wooden “siopa”, balance beams, a climb and slide unit and hoola hoops.

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 to the 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.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean with cleaning schedules available. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. A fridge was available for the storage of perishable goods in the pre-school room.

Administration of Medication:

Administration of medication documentation was available in the service if required. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed throughout the service. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider stated that the application for re-vetting of the identified staff member was submitted upon identification on 10.03.25.

A current garda vetting disclosure is now in place on the staff file for the identified staff member. (Photographic evidence included).

The registered provider will ensure that vetting is checked and re done within the required timeframe.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken photographic 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 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 staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the pre-school room.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for 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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 08 February 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises was serviced in January 2025. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in March 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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 children were observed to be supervised by the four staff present during inspection. Children were accompanied by a staff member when using the toilet and handwashing was supervised. Staff supervised the children when playing in the outdoor play area. A staff member was observed to provide the handover of the care of each child to the parent or guardian at collection time.

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. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.