

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020TY001		
Name of Service:	Scoláirí Óga Preschool & Afterschool		
Address of Service:	Kilbarron National School, Kilbarron, Co. Tipperary		
Eircode:	E45 AW72		
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle McGrath		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary		
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney		
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

This sessional and part time service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years. During the current school year all of the children attend on a sessional basis. A registered school aged care service is also provided outside the hours of operation of the early years service.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 2pm, for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour session, 9am – 12pm, Monday – Friday that is funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

This is a sister service to Scoláirí Óga Pre-school in Ballycommon, Nenagh.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service as she is based in the sister service in Ballycommon. She is available to call on if required.

There is a designated person in charge who works directly with the children each day supported by a second member of staff. There are three staff who share the post of second member of staff each week.

All staff who work in the service hold a recognised 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26 and 28.

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 registered provider, 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

(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

The staff files of the four members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of all members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of two members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all members of staff. Relevant records were stored on file.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the state.

Relevant records were stored on file.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 6 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were two staff working directly with fourteen children aged between 2.5 and 5 years on the morning of the inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at one adult to seven children throughout the inspection, which was greater than the minimum requirements of one to eleven.

(8)(c) There were two staff working with the children throughout the inspection, in addition, there were staff within the national school who could be called on if needed in an emergency.

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) The children had access to their room within the school, which was bright, comfortable and well laid out for play, exploration and relaxation. The interest areas were well defined and furniture was moved around to support a variety of activities such as dining, arts and crafts, circle time and free play time. The children had daily access to the school grounds for outdoor play.

(b) Sleep facilities were not required as all of the children attended for three hours each day and all were aged over two years. There was a relaxation and reading area in one corner where the children could rest when they wanted to.

(2)(a) The school grounds were used for outdoor play and included a ball court with tarmacadam surface and playing fields with grass surface. The gates at the front of the school were secured when the children were outside to prevent them gaining access to the roadway in front of the school.

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 service was well equipped with a wide range and quantity of furniture, toys, materials and equipment. There were child sized tables and chairs that were moved around and arranged in different configurations depending on the needs of the children and the activity engaged in. There was a two-seater compact sofa in one corner and child sized armchairs for the children to relax in. There were standard sized chairs for the staff to use.

Toys and materials were displayed on open shelving units or in play units such as the kitchen. Everything was available within easy reach of the children so that they could access what they wanted independently. It also supported the children to put things back in the proper place at tidy-up time. Many of the toys were made from painted wood and were well maintained.

Toys and materials supported learning and development across all areas of development including imaginative play materials, books, sensory and manipulative play materials, construction toys, small world toys and craft materials.

Toys and equipment for use outdoors were stored at the end of the corridor beside the door used by the service to enter and leave the premises. Outdoor materials included balance bikes, balls and push toys such as dolls buggies with dolls and wheelbarrows. Children chose what they wanted to bring outside to play with. An outdoor seating area had recently been developed in the school grounds on the tarmac area. This consisted of a large throne surrounded by curved benches which created a circle. The furniture was made from an all-weather material and was fixed in position.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Children brought packed lunches to eat during snack time at 11am. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge in the room. Children brought their own drink bottles of water or squash that were kept on a low table near the door where the children could access them when they wanted a drink. The bottles were refilled with water when required.

Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: sandwiches, smoothies, rice cakes, bread rolls, wraps, flapjacks, bagels, pasta, crackers, scones, fromage frais, yoghurt and fruit (cucumber, strawberries, banana, apple and mandarins).

Birthdays were celebrated with a cake and small treats served after snack.

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) The attendance register was kept outside the door where it could be easily accessed and filled in by staff as the children arrived and departed from the service.

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) The person in charge held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) The first aid box was well stocked and stored in a visible position beside the sink unit in the room.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending 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 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 written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 18 April 2023.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The annual serving of both was carried out recently on 17 April 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the service.

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 current insurance for up to 20 early years children and 20 school aged care children valid until 27 March 2024.