

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023CC003
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Name of Service:	Fermoy Community Preschool & Afterschool CLG,
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Address of Service:	C/O Presentation Primary School, College Road, Fermoy. Cork.
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Eircode:	P61 N562
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karina Murphy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	134 Bank Place, Mallow, Cork. P51 EC59
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Fermoy Community Preschool and Afterschool CLG is a sessional service in operation since September 2023. While registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years of age children currently attending are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years old. The service is open Monday to Friday, and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) is facilitated between the hours of 9.15 am and 12.15 pm, 38 weeks of the year.

Fermoy Community Preschool and Afterschool CLG operates from an extension built in 2018, located at the front of Presentation Primary School in the urban town of Fermoy, County Cork. It consists of an office, locked storage cupboard, large classroom off which there is an adjoining messy room, a sensory room, staff room, kitchen, adult toilet with a nappy changing unit and two children's toilets. Children have access to the school playground area and the indoor hall; a shared outdoor play area is still in progress. Car parking is located to the front and side of the school grounds. A school age service is in operation from 1.30 pm until 5.30 pm, term time only.

Staffing

There were three staff members including one AIM Support Worker working directly with the children in the service. The registered provider was also available to facilitate the inspection process.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of the child and safety. 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 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

(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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise. The registered provider was available along with the designated person to facilitate the inspection.

(b) The designated person in charge and the named person were both on the premises when the inspector arrived. The staff rosters indicated that both were available in the service while the pre-school children were present.

(c) There was a clear management system available on the parent's notice board in the hallway of the service. In conversation, staff stated they were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) As the registered provider's recruitment file had been reviewed previously, recruitment files for the three adults working directly with the children on the morning of the inspection were reviewed.

(a) (b) There were five validated references from past employers and one validated reference from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all three adults.

(d) Documentation was available which indicated that none of the adults had lived outside Ireland for more than six consecutive months as adults, therefore international police vetting was not required.

(3) All staff vetting, and references had been carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) There was evidence that the three adults working directly with the children had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(3) Staff rosters and attendance records indicated that adult/child ratios were adhered to. On the morning of the inspection there were thirteen children in attendance with three adults, one of whom was the AIM Support Worker.

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) The pre-school records of the thirteen children present on the day of inspection were reviewed. Each were found to contain the particulars of (a) to (i) above.

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)

(a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, designated person, named person and of every employee was kept in the staff recruitment files.

(b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide were available on the Tusla Registration Certificate displayed in the hallway of the service.

(c) The details of the adult child ratios were kept in the attendance book and staff rosters available in the classroom.

(d) (e) (f) The type of care programme available was in the parent handbook along with the facilities available, opening hours and fees.

(g) The services policies and procedures, required for Regulation 10, were kept in soft form in the office in the service.

(h) The attendance records for each child were available and stored in an attendance book in the classroom.

(i) The staff rosters were furnished to the inspector and had been completed daily.

(j) There was no administration of medication records completed to date, as the service only commenced operation in September 2023.

(k) There were no records of accidents and incidents recorded in the book. In conversation, staff stated no accidents or incidents had taken place since the beginning of operation in September 2023.

(3) The records referred to in paragraph 1 were open to review by the inspector on the premises on the day of inspection.

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:

- Children were observed sitting at three tables for snack at 11.10 am. Each child was observed helping by collecting their perishable food from the fridge and their water bottles from the tables.
- Snack was provided by the parents/guardians and was noted to be healthy and nutritious with children observed eating filled sandwiches and brioches, bite sized fruit pieces, yogurt and cheese.
- Children's individual water bottles were observed stored on a table beside the fridge where the children had access to them throughout the morning.
- Alternative food was available in the fridge in the kitchen and was noted to include cereal, bread, cheese and ham, should a child require them.
- Opportunities for children to rest or sit quietly were provided in both the rest/quiet areas of the Superstars classroom and the sensory room. Furnishings included a chair which folded down into a soft mat, cushions, mats, individual vinyl circle mats, bean bag and a princess tent.
- Children could easily access the toilet area off the main classroom independently and adults were nearby to provide help if required.
- A visual sequence of handwashing instructions was available in the children's bathroom area aiding children to develop independence with self-care routines.
- Children were encouraged to carry out self-help skills for themselves including putting on their own coats, collecting and returning equipment from low-level shelving and collecting and disposing of tissues for blowing their noses.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- A key person approach was stated as being in operation in the service. Staff stated they were responsible for building a relationship with their key child and the child's parents/guardians. They record observations of each child including their needs and interests which are then used to inform future planning. Staff stated the key person and the manager will communicate with the parents if there is an issue or concern.
- Staff members were heard praising and encouraging children's efforts. An example included when one child helped another child to sweep the sand off the floor and the staff member praised the children for helping to keep the room clean and safe.
- Children were supported to engage with each other positively during sand play with staff reminding children not to throw sand in case it went into the children's eyes.
- Staff stated formal meetings with the registered provider take place weekly, where topics discussed include, training, children and general maintenance of the service. Staff have a messaging application which is also in. Informal discussions around planning were stated as happening on a daily basis in the classroom.
- Various methods of communication were stated as being in use to exchange information and communicate with parents/guardians including, verbally at drop off and collection at the service entrance, a messaging application to convey a group message and by email.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The Superstars classroom was clearly laid out to encourage playful opportunities to enhance the learning needs of all children across all developmental areas. There were large water and sand troughs in the messy room and the inspector observed children playing in the sand with resources which provided opportunities for learning through curiosity, problem solving, exploration and creativity.
- A separate sensory room was available which provided resources including touchy feely spheres including stringy, spikey, fluffy and bumpy and silky ribbons. There was a ball pool for helping children to feel supported in space and mats for the children to sit and relax on. This room provided staff and children with a quite space which encouraged a relaxing and calming atmosphere.
- Toys and resources, which were age and stage appropriate, were organised in baskets on low-level shelving which encouraged the children to make choices and also promoted independence.
- Equipment available in the outdoor play area provided opportunities for the children to practice their gross motor skills including cycling, throwing/catching and running/jumping. There was a covered area facilitating outdoor play in all weathers.

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 service was secured internally with a mortice lock ensuring that unauthorised adults could not gain entry and children could not leave the service unsupervised.
- The external fire exit door was secured internally with a thumb twist cylinder and externally with a key lock.
- The school playground, located at the rear of the service, was secured by the external walls of classrooms, metal fencing and bolted gates ensuring no unauthorised adult could enter the area and no child could leave unsupervised.
- Window blinds were operated with a spring roller which did not require cords.
- All toys and equipment were noted to be in a good state of repair and in good condition.
- Heavy storage units were secured to prevent tipping or falling.
- Pedal operated bins were available for the storage of waste in the classroom.
- Cleaning agents in the toilet area were stored out of reach of the children on a high shelf and cleaning agents in the classroom were stored in the locked storage cupboard room off the main classroom area.
- The kettle was stored in the kitchen which was observed to be closed and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Staff were observed disinfecting tables before and after the serving of food and sweeping the floor after food ensuring the area was hygienic and safe.
- Adults and children had access to thermostatically controlled hot water, dispensing foam soap, dispensing paper roll and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste. Staff were available nearby to ensure that the children were able to clean off all of the paint from their hands from a finger-painting activity.
- Children were observed washing their hands after messy activities, before and after snack and after toileting and nappy changing.

- There was a designated nappy changing area in the adult toilet. A pedal operated nappy bin was available for the disposal of used nappies, which was observed in use on the morning of inspection. Staff were observed changing their apron and gloves after each change and the mat was disinfected after each use. Children's individual belongings were within reach.
- A fridge was available and was observed in use for the hygienic storage of the children's perishable food.
- Cleaning rotas were available and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication, stored in its original container, was stored out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed resting during the morning session. Rest/quiet areas were available, if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers were located on frames off the ground.
- The fire assembly sign was visible on a tree at the back of the service.