

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023LS001		
Name of Service:	Silly Billies Playschool		
Address of Service:	Killimy, Emo, Portlaoise, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R32 KF74		
Name of Registered Provider:	Bernadette McLoughlin		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	20/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM Nil
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:	D. Molloy		
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 service operates from within a converted old national school in the village of Emo which is now used for the sole purpose of operating an early years' service. The service is comprised of an entrance hall/lobby, one playroom, three toilets and wash hand basins for children's use and another toilet is available for staff use. A kitchenette /cloakroom and a walk-in storage room is also provided. An enclosed outdoor play area is located along the side and to the back of the premises.

Staffing

Two adults were working directly with the pre-school children including the person in charge. One student and the registered provider were also present All staff members working directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 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 registered provider, 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.*

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider and the designated person in charge were present during the inspection. The person in charge facilitated the inspection and the roster showed that at all times the person in charge was present during the opening hours of the service.

(2)

All staff files were reviewed on site on the day of inspection.

(a) Validated references from staff members' past employers, in particular the most recent employer was available for review.

(b) Validated references from reputable sources were available for inspection.

(c) A vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all-staff members was available for review.

(d) Police vetting from other police authorities was not required for any staff members.

(3)

Required vetting had been carried out prior to staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

All employees held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5-6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6)(a)(b)

Not applicable as no employee had signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016, to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service or were in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that this shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A)

No staff member was working with children under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) on the day.

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) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. The registered provider ensured that there were sufficient adults working directly with the children and records showed that the adult child ratio was upheld in the service.

(3)
The registered provider had ensured that the adult child ratio was correctly maintained throughout the inspection and records showed that sufficient adults were rostered to work in the service each day.

(8)
(c) The service is not operated single handedly

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider had ensured that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations was available on the premises and could be viewed by

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker, or contractor, and
- (c) an authorised person.

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

The staff recognised the fact that some children had only started their early childhood educational journey and were observed to be kind and supportive and answered questions truthfully as to when their parents would be back to collect them which helped dispel their worries.

Children brought in their own lunches from home in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. It was observed that children were given sufficient time to eat their lunch at their own pace, some chose to picnic outdoors in the roofed area wearing their outdoor wear and supervised by a staff member.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

Communication was noted to be a two-way system as observed by staff giving detailed hand over information to parents at end of session and addressing parents anxiety about how their child was settling. Engaged participation by parents was encouraged, and parents could arrange a meeting with manager to discuss their own children's progress if they wished. Parents were invited to bring their child to an open day and visit the service before starting in preschool and a newsletter was issued with events and upcoming themes.

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 entry to the service was secured so as to ensure the safety of the children as the main door was operated on a controlled entry system from inside. The external side gate in the play area was secured from inside. The outdoor play area was securely fenced by means of fencing around the perimeters and could be accessed directly from the service.

Refuse bins were stored away from play area and were inaccessible to children.

A pest control system was in place and was monitored to safeguard against pests.

Cleaning, sanitising products and equipment were stored in a designated locked cupboard out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained. Staff were familiar with the infection control policy and parents had been issued with an up-to-date copy. Children were observed washing their hands regularly and adults were observed offering assistance if necessary.

The service was well ventilated with openable windows in all areas.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

A site-specific medication management policy was available in the service. Staff were familiar with policy and practice in relation to safe administration of medication.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes were unobstructed.

A notice of the fire assembly point was on display to show fire assembly point in the play area at the back of the service.

Outing:

The registered provider stated no outing would be undertaken 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 staff members held first aid training and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

The Registered Provider held up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) certification.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on the premises,

(b) The first aid box was readily available in the service at all times

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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 written record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on 2 October 2023 .
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. The fire alarms were serviced on 27 July 2023, and the firefighting equipment was checked on 31 July 2023.
- (2)
The record was available and open to parents, guardians, employees, and the authorised person.
- (3)
The person in charge stated that records were retained for a period of 5 years after creation.
- (4)
A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of up-to-date insurance cover for the number of children attending the service was available in the service.
The insurance certificate was valid until March 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider facilitated the inspection and provided access to all information as was required for completion of the inspection.