

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD007
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Name of Service:	Ballinroad Pre-School
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Address of Service:	St. Laurence's Hall, Ballinroad, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	
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Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Collins
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford.
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.
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
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Description of service

Ballinroad Preschool is a privately owned pre-school operating from St Laurence's Parish Hall in Ballinroad, approximately 4 kilometres from Dungarvan town in Co Waterford. The building has a large hall and two rooms off the hall that is provided for the playgroup. The premises is on approximately one acre of ground that has parking, a large green area, and artificial grass pitches. The service opened in 1993 and presently offers a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) from 09:00hrs to 12:00hrs Monday to Friday for children aged 2 years 10 months to 5 years of age.

Staffing

There were two staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection, one of whom was the registered provider.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 25 - First aid.

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Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures.

Regulation 27 – Supervision.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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-

- (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*

(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 was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was part of the staff compliment and available throughout the inspection.

(2)

There was no change in the staff since the last inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in the last 36 months on behalf of staff whose role necessitated this.

(4)

There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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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)

On the day of inspection, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(3)

There were 11 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 2 childcare workers.

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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to meeting children's care and programme of activities.

The service was based in the parish hall of a suburban village community that had a recent increase for childcare requirements for young families due to extensive housing development in the area. They had the use of two rooms and the hall in the parish centre. The registered provider explained that the playgroup had operated a play-

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based approach to learning as play was the most natural and effective learning mechanism for young children. The setting was child centred and homely, and children were observed at free play after arrival and were happy, familiar and comfortable in their new surroundings. The registered provider explained that five of the children were returning to do the second ECCE year while the remainder were new children who were in the first week in the setting. Staff were observed to interact in a sensitive and unhurried manner with these children and spoke caringly about the adjustment for them back into the new pre-school year.

One room was set up with tables, chairs, the children sat around these for the snack that was served up by the staff. Children brought one piece of fruit every day and this was cut and served on a platter for all the children to share. The service provided a wholegrain biscuit and sugar free juice or water drinks.

Play materials laid out on low level shelving with an ample supply of fine motor play materials. In one corner of this room an extensive home corner was provided which included a wooden toy cooker, a sink unit, shelving with crockery, an ironing board, and a dolls cot. Due to the high child staff ratios children were observed getting regular individual attention. The atmosphere was cheerful, comfortable and relaxed.

The second room was designated for messy play such as sand and water play as well as supplies of wooden blocks and junk materials. The room had baskets of animals and small cars for children to choose from for small world floor play. The reading/rest area had a comfortable, cushions and display bookshelves with age-appropriate books. Two children were observed relaxing and browsing through a book together.

After the snack children and staff moved outdoor where the service had the use of the extensive grounds around the parish centre for nature walks as well as the use of two large, grassed areas, Astro turf pitches and tarmacademed courts, all suitable for outdoor games and activities.

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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)

All three staff available to work with the children in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid bag in the pre-school room.

(b) This first aid bag was suitably equipped, well stocked and available at all times.

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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 recording system was provided to ensure a monthly record was maintained of fire drills as conducted and it was noted that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 4 September 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced on 30 November 2023 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 25 January 2024.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the notice board in the second room and in the main lobby of the parish centre which contained details of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

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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 service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified, had extensive experience and the registered provider had over 16 years experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

A documented risk assessment was available since the last inspection for the transfer of children from the pre - school room in the parish hall to the grassed and Astroturf area for outdoor play. A walking rope was used for the safe supervision and transfer of the children through the carpark to the outdoor play facilities that were secure, fenced and gated.

The service was divided between two rooms the opening between the rooms allowed for children to be watched easily and the staff were observed standing at the opening to enable them to have supervision of the two rooms at any given time.

Parents and guardians were observed waiting at the collection time where children were handed over at the main door immediately outside the pre-school. Fencing was erected near the main door in order to confine this space for the safety of children during this change over. It was observed that each child was handed over individually to their respective parent or guardian.