TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD007
Name of Service:	Ballinroad Preschool
Address of Service:	St Laurence's Hall, Ballinroad, Dungarvan, Co. Waterford.
Email Address:	tricia.collins@ymail.com
Name of Registered Service Provider:	Ms. Patricia Collins
Type of service registered:	**Sessional** ✓

Date of Inspection:	0	3	1	2	2	0	2	1

No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:	**AM**	18	**PM**	n/a

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford.
Inspection undertaken by: **Title:**	M. Ryan Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	**Health, Welfare and Development**	**Safety**

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	Ballinroad Preschool is a privately owned early years service operating from St Laurence's Parish Hall in Ballinroad approximately four 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 Astroturf 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. The service can provide for a maximum of 18 early years children on a sessional basis at any given time.
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. 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 areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that the inspector spends in the service. 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.
Acknowledgements	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.

GOVERNANCE

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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

Compliance Information:	(2) There was no change in the staff since the last inspection. All staff files were compliant on review at the last inspection. (7) (a) All three childcare professionals available to work directly with the children hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or higher. The records showed that the staff had completed online training on 23 June 2020 for return to work in line with the Health Protection Surveillance Centre (HPSC) COVID-19 public health guidance. This was provided by a childcare professional organisation and covered areas on infection prevention and control, the use of personal protective equipment (PPE), hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file. All three staff available to work directly with the children held a minimum award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Quality Qualifications Ireland (QQI) to level 6.

Part III - Management and Staff	
Regulation 10 - Policies, Procedures etc. of Pre-school service	
A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.	
Compliance Information:	The inspection focused on revised policies, procedures and statements in line with the HPSC COVID-19 public health guidance. A hard copy of each of the policies and procedures were available on the premises in a designated folder. Staff had confirmed in writing that they had read and accepted the policies and procedures. The registered provider confirmed that all parents received a copy of the revised policies and procedures via email.

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) thereof 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) On the day of inspection, there was one play pod in operation for the duration of the opening hours of the service. There were 18 children aged 3 to 5 years of age being cared for and supervised by two staff. (3) The adult:child ratios were correct in accordance with the early years services regulations 2016. (8)(c) Not applicable as there were three staff on the premises on the day of the 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*	
Compliance Information:	**SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:** The service was based in a suburban village community that had a recent increase for childcare requirements for young families due to extensive housing development in the area. The provider spoke of the increased demand for the ECCE scheme since the last inspection and the links with the local community groups such as the local soccer club that were on the adjoining property. The atmosphere was cheerful, comfortable and relaxed. The staff were observed to interact in a sensitive and unhurried manner with the children and spoke caringly about the children's readjustment back into the early years structure. The service had introduced a general social media messaging app group and e-mail as new methods of communication with parents since the COVID-19 period. The early years leader commented on how well the social media messaging app group was for informing parents of any upcoming events and changes within the service. However, most engagement with parents and guardians took place informally at drop off and collection times. The early years leader informed the inspector she was happy to meet with parents privately at their request. **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:** Since the last inspection there was major refurbishment carried out to the hall. All doors and windows were replaced with double glazed units and the whole premises had been insulated and repainted. The registered provider reported that the building was easier to heat and was now a more pleasant environment to work in with the children. There was one play pod system set up in accordance with the recommended HPSC COVID-19 public health guidelines and this was divided between two rooms of which opened into each other. One room was set up with tables, chairs, and 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, dolls cot and a decorated Christmas tree. 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

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service	
Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child	
	and small cars for children to choose from for small world floor play. The reading/rest area had a comfortable two-seater couch, cushions and display bookshelves with age-appropriate books. Two children were observed relaxing and browsing through a book together. Children had the freedom of a large community hall adjacent to the playrooms for gross motor play. On the day of the inspection the children were observed enjoying the freedom of the hall with the large variety of ride on equipment available to them. <u>Outdoor area</u> The service had the use of extensive grounds around the community centre for nature walks as well as the use of two large, grassed areas, Astroturf pitches and tarmacademed courts, all suitable for outdoor games and activities.

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:	The service has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending: **GENERAL SAFETY:** The external door to the hall had suitable locks to prevent children from exiting unsupervised. Cleaning agents were stored in a high locked cupboard out of children's reach. All heaters were guarded. Attendance records were completed daily for the staff and children attending. The attendance book corresponded with the number of children present on the day of inspection. **INFECTION CONTROL:** The service had updated and extended the infection control policies and procedures in line with HPSC COVID-19 public health advice. The following measures were observed on the day: Guidance signage was displayed at various locations both inside and outside the hall advising on signs and symptoms of COVID-19, such as face coverings and social distancing. Parents were noticed to observe social distancing practices when collecting the children. A hand sanitiser was available at the entrance to the childcare service in the early years room. Hand washing facilities were provided in the children's toilet areas with liquid hand soap, warm water and disposable paper hand towels.

Part VI - Safety	
Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child	
	Supplies of tissues were readily available and foot pedalled lidded bins were supplied for the waste disposal of these. Child friendly prompts with picture instructions for respiratory etiquette and hand washing were displayed. The premises was observed to be maintained to a high standard of hygiene. There were cleaning records documented for the toys, equipment, the childcare room, sanitary area and touch points. Both staff wore face coverings throughout the duration of the inspection. Both staff spoke with the inspector of the importance of hand washing and respiratory etiquette for the children. A dedicated isolation area was available in the big hall for use in the event of a child or a staff member becoming unwell.
Non-Compliance Information:	**GENERAL SAFETY:** The grounds around the community hall were extensive and secured from the road by a gate and a high wall. The gates were required to be left open for community access at times when the service is in operation. Furthermore, the fencing that cordoned off some of the grassed area that children used for outdoor play was broken and had been partly removed. Therefore, a child could leave the area unsupervised and gain access to the road.
Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider	**CORRECTIVE ACTION:** The registered provider stated in the response on the 6 January 2022 that further to the completion of a risk assessment on the grassed area the Astro tuff area is presently being used. The astro turf is secure, fenced and gated where the children can safely play outdoors. This area will be used until such time as the fencing is replaced. **PREVENTIVE ACTION:** The registered provider stated in the response on the 6 January 2022 that the fencing will be replaced by trades men in coming weeks. **EVIDENCE SUBMITTED** A copy of the risk assessment was submitted on 6 November 2021.
Summary Comment:	All evidence submitted meets the requirements Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.