

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

OTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD020
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Name of Service:	Early Days
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Address of Service:	Co. St Paul's B.N.S., Lisduggan, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 YX80
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Name of Registered Provider:	Suzanne Griffin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	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

Early Days Pre-School is located on the grounds of St. Pauls Boys National School on the outskirts of Waterford City. The service was set up in 2004 by the board of management of the school. The service presently offers two sessions of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. Early days operates from 09:00hrs to 12:30hrs Monday to Friday for children aged 3 to 5 years of age. The service runs from two rooms attached to St. Pauls Boys National School with the use of the school facilities including the various outdoor playgrounds and gardens. A secured area adjacent to the service entrance has been designated for outdoor play for the sole use of the children attending the pre-school.

Staffing

The school principal is the registered provider. The service has a pre-school leader as the designated person in charge and employs a further five childcare workers.

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

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Regulation 25 - First aid

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.

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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*
- (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.*

(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 playgroup leaders were the designated persons in charge of each room and there were named persons able to deputise if required.
 - (b) At all times during the inspection the playgroup leaders and registered provider were on the premises.
 - (c) The service was governed by the board of management of St Paul's B.N.S. Lisduggan, the registered provider was the school principal who was a member of the board of management. There were clear details regarding the lines of accountability and responsibility for the staff working in the service.

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Since the last inspection on the 11 June 2021 and on review of the staff files, it was evident that there were three new staff members employed to work with the children in the service. The files of the other staff had been reviewed and found compliant on previous inspections.

- (2)
- (a) Six written past employee references were available in respect of the new staff members working in the service, with recorded validations for each reference.
- (b) Not applicable as employee references from a reputable source were not required.
- (c) There was evidence of completed Garda vetting disclosure certificates from An Garda Síochána available on file for all staff and these were completed in the last three years.
- (d) Not applicable as no staff employed to work in the service had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six months therefore police vetting certificates from outside the jurisdiction were not required.
- (4)
- There was evidence that staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5,6 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

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(3)

In the senior pre-school room, there were 14 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 2 childcare staff. In the junior pre-school room, there were 9 children from 2 years 8 months to 4 years of age being cared for by 2 childcare staff.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) and (b)

Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed and explained in relation to the provision of the programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

On arrival to the service children were having a St. Patricks parade around the school premises to Irish music. Children for the most part were dressed in green outfits, hats and some had face painted shamrocks and stickers. The children were marching, running and jumping to the music and generally excited about the forthcoming weekend celebrations. The pre-school is adjoined to St. Pauls national school.

There were two rooms being used for the pre-school service with separate entrance from the school, these rooms were observed to be cheerful, colourful and stimulating. Both rooms were kitted with age-appropriate tables, chairs and low-level shelves for toys and materials to be freely available and accessible to children. All the furniture and toys were arranged in distinct areas around the room. The service had made a self-referral to Better Start, the National Early Years Quality Development Programme for support and advice on room layout, this was ongoing, and both pre-school leaders were positive regarding this engagement.

The atmosphere in the service was friendly and welcoming and the interactions between the children and staff were observed to be familiar and supportive. The children were observed to be happy and enjoying the St. Patrick festival activities. The senior group rehearsed for the inspector "Irelands Call" standing shoulder to shoulder and

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arm in arm and demonstrated their céilí dancing to traditional Irish music. The playgroup leader spoke of the importance of developing children's independence, and confidence by introducing practices for helping out such as turn taking for bag helpers. A further example was a "lína leader" which was when the child first in line called the other children by name to join the line. Each day a different child was nominated as the "lína leader", this practise was observed to encourage children to get to know each other by name. The leader child of the line was observed taking delight in this responsibility.

Children in the junior room were observed at free play both indoors and outdoors. One of their highlights was an exercise game called "the floor is lava" which required them to get a seat quickly and lift their legs when the music stopped, this was a source of fun and excitement for them. At home time in this room the children were given their St. Patricks day hats which had been an ongoing project during the week in preparation for their celebrations for the weekend. Children were observed showing these to their parents with great pride and were a source of discussion and surprise during hand over at the gate when children were leaving for the weekend.

The registered provider explained that the curriculum was planned on a monthly basis. This theme based around the seasons and festivals of the year. The daily routine was flexible, and child led. The pre-school leaders demonstrated to the inspector the learning journals that were compiled work and photographs.

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

- (2)
- (a) There was a first aid box in pre-school room 1. This was stored on a high shelf in the kitchen area. In pre-school room 2 the first aid box was wall mounted.
- (b) Both first aid boxes were suitably equipped and available at all times.

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Non-Compliance Information

(1)

All first aid training for the staff working with the children had expired.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider had sourced First Aid Responder FAR training to be attended within the next two months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in the response on 27 April 2024 that a staff member has undertaken and successfully completed updating the First Aid Responder course. This action will be undertaken by each preschool room leader annually (end-August) and in the event of a first aider leaving the service a new staff member will start training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Certification of completed FAR training on 25 March 2024 was submitted to the inspectorate on 27 April 2024.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted met the requirements for regulation 25 (First aid) of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.