

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH027
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Name of Service:	Sarsfield Pre -school
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Address of Service:	Sarsfield Community Centre, Sarsfield Square, Athlone, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 HX00
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Name of Registered Provider:	Cyril Dully
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	C O' Connor Hughes
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

This community service is registered as a part time service to operate between the hours of 09:00 to 13:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is currently operating from 09:30 to 12:30 delivering the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is from 2 to 6 years of age.

The service is based in Sarsfield's Community Centre consisting of a playroom and kitchen. There is an outdoor space at the back of the service for children's use.

The service is part of a multiple operated by Athlone Community Services Council, CLG.

Staffing

The designated person in charge and staff member were present on the 11 June 2024 working directly with the children.

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/ 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

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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 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.*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Evidence of a clear management structure was displayed in the service.

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Four staff files including the relief staff members were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of four staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member or the registered provider had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The designated person in charge ensured employees were vetted prior to commencing employment in the service.

(4)

The staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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.

(4) to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(4)

There were eight children attending the service supervised directly by the designated person in charge and staff member.

(8)(a)

Documentation indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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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)
Eleven children were registered in the service and all eleven child records were inspected. Information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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;*

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- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

Written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k) were available and reviewed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parental information was available in a parent handbook in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

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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 designated person in charge presented a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations for inspection of (a)(b)(c).

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)

Children enjoyed the various play experiences in the pre-school room including creative play and free play during the morning session supported by staff. Children enjoyed preparing for the graduation ceremony the following day.

Children enjoyed a healthy lunch provided by their parents consisting of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurt with water to drink. Staff sat and ate their lunch with children and encouraged conversation and interactions. Children washed their hands before lunch and after messy activities. Children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff.

A key person approach was used in the service thus helping to promote the emotional security of children.

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Staff were positive towards children using their individual names and maintaining eye contact during conversation and play activities. Positive praise was given to children on the completion of activities. Staff were familiar with the children and their personalities. Children requiring extra reassurance were attended to by staff in a calm and caring manner. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

Partnership with parents was noted in the service as a verbal handover was given to parents on collection of the children. A parent information handbook is given to parents at the start of the pre-school term. Information and daily activities are shared with parents through a handheld electronic device. Children's learning journals depicting play activities and child development observations are shared with parents during the pre-school term. The service had made links to the community as the Sub Aqua Club, Order of Malta and Fire Brigade visited the children in the service recently.

The pre-school room was bright and colourful. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs was available in the pre-school room. Interest areas included a home area, construction area, dress up and arts and crafts area. Toys and materials were age and stage appropriate available to children on low level shelving. Children's artwork was displayed with the theme "under the sea". Family photographs were displayed.

Evidence of curriculum planning with the Early Childhood Curriculum was noted in the service. A group learning journal with photographic evidence was available for review.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors which included toys and equipment for tabletop activities, creative, imaginary play, sensory and physical play.

(b)

A cosy rest area with comfortable couches was available for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

A small outdoor space was available at the back of the service. Equipment and materials to support outdoor play was stored indoors. A staff member was observed to set up the outdoor play space for children's use.

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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 front door to the service was locked and secure to keep the children safe within. A bell system was in place for access to the service. The inspector signed the visitor book on arrival.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Safety checklists were maintained on a daily basis for the indoor and outdoor environments.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. Toys and materials were easily cleanable and cleaning records were available and reviewed.

Warm running water, soap and hand towels stored in dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature at wash hand basins was recorded at 30 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after playdough activity.

Mechanical ventilation was noted in the sanitary accommodation. Openable windows allowed for natural ventilation in the pre-school rooms.

Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste materials.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable goods in the kitchen. A record was kept of fridge temperatures to ensure they were maintained within the correct limits.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was given at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed in the service.

Outing:

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The designated person stated the service does not undertake outings.

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 designated person in charge and a relief staff member were qualified in First Aid Response (FAR).

(2)(a)

A first aid box was located in the storage room off the pre-school room.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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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 fire fighting 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.
- (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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 24 May 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 5 December 2023 and 2 August 2023.

(2)

The fire maintenance records were open to inspection in respect of (a)(b)(c).

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

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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 eight children in attendance were supervised by the designated person in charge and staff member at all times in the pre-school room and when using the sanitary accommodation during the inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 28 February 2025.