

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

A TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR003
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Name of Service:	Blackrock Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Lower Hall, Urban Junction, 42 Main St, Blackrock, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 Y3X7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon O'Reilly
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	Not Applicable
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency Brunel Building, Floor 7 Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	Margaret Bermingham
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).

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Description of service

Blackrock Community Playgroup is registered to provide part time and sessional care for up to 30 children aged 2 - 6 years. Part-time operating hours are 09:00 to 12:45 and a sessional service runs from 9:45 to 12:45. The service operates from two rooms in a former church, and the space is shared with other organisations outside of preschool hours. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area to the front of the building.

Staffing

The service employs eight adults including the registered provider, five of whom, were present on the day of inspection and 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, and safety. 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

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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.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN0188	04/06/2026	The water temperature in the sinks that children were using to wash their hands was measured at 53°C, 52.1°C and 52.3°C at 11:04.
Status	The registered provider acted immediately following service of the notice and submitted a written response detailing corrective and preventive actions taken and these were accepted by the inspectorate. The registered provider submitted confirmation that water control valves were installed.	
Improvement Notice IN0189	04/06/2026	A document appearing to be international police vetting certificate for a staff member was written in a language other than English. There was no certified translation of the document available, as required. A certified translation must be submitted to the inspectorate prior to the staff member having access to children.

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Status	The registered provider submitted a written response detailing corrective and preventive actions taken, which were accepted by the inspectorate. The registered provider submitted the translated document.
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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not notify the inspectorate in writing of a change to the person in charge, as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider stated that a change in circumstance form was submitted to the inspectorate and that the internal position roles within the management structure were clarified with staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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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.

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Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and/or the deputy were rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place evidenced by observing the operation of the service and through discussion with staff.

(2)

There were eight adults employed by the service, three of whom, commenced since the last inspection on 7 December 2023. This was determined through a review of previous inspection information and the current roster, and discussion with the person in charge. Vetting documentation was reviewed for the three new adults and Garda vetting renewals and references were reviewed for existing adults. The following vetting considerations were found:

- (a) Four written and verified references from past employers were available.
- (b) Two written and verified references from sources other than past employers were available.
- (c) Three Garda vetting disclosures were available. Garda vetting renewals were available in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate's regulatory notice requiring three-year renewal for all adults employed.

(4)

Three of three staff, whose qualification records were reviewed and who were working directly with children, held the required qualification or recognised equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

- (a) (b) Two written and verified references for one adult were not available. Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) was found non-compliant on previous inspections dating 07 December 2023, 02 June 2021 and 04 March 2019. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
- (d) See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0189.

(3)

A review of documentation showed that the procedures specified in regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were not completed prior to four adults commencing in the service as required. Allowing adults work with children before their suitability is established may result in individuals who are not appropriate having access to children.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The registered provider stated that the references had been misfiled and were now located. A checklist is in place to ensure all relevant documentation is present in the correct files. In future, all staff including those who initially start on work experience will be asked for two references before starting and these will be checked prior to the person commencing.

(3)

The registered provider stated that references will be signed off before employing staff or work experience candidates. A checklist will be used to ensure this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliances identified. The regulatory requirement has been met.

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.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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)-

(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,

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Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection; there were five adults working with 25 children.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times, as observed and found through a review of staff sign in sheets.

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*
 - (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)(b) The following observations demonstrated how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service and how appropriate and suitable care practices were in place:
- Children were provided with two opportunities for snacks, that were provided by parents, at 10:40 and 12:15, and included items in line with a healthy eating philosophy. Children drank water from individual beakers at snack times and an additional water jug was made available throughout the morning. Staff helped children prepare for snacks and open their lunchboxes. Children were supported with their toileting and personal care needs in a sensitive and caring manner and in line with the service's guidance that was displayed.

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Staff supported relationships around children as they participated in play and activities. The children appeared familiar and content within the routine. Adults provided prompts and reminders for upcoming transitions and used positive encouragement to support children as a group and individually. Visual prompts were available to support children including a picture of the daily routine, first and next prompts, and displays of class manners and helpers. Staff and children participated in activities together such as circle time, singing songs, reading stories and chatting in conversation. A sense of belonging for children was provided by displays of their artwork, a friendship garden, their birthdays, and photographs of children engaging in activities. The person in charge confirmed that relationships with parents and families are promoted through discussion at drop off and collection, and staff were observed in friendly chats with parents who were arriving. The person in charge confirmed that parents are informed about children's activities digitally and that one-to-one meeting with parents were completed with records of same available.

Learning opportunities were provided for children and current activity plans and themes were displayed. Children were engaged in play and activities and were socialising with peers to include pretend play with dolls and buggies, a small world dolls house and figurines, and small wheeled cars and train tracks. Other activities that children engaged in included blocks, playdough, mark making, and arts and crafts. Activities were set up playfully and children's voices were heard and responded to.

The environment was laid out in defined areas to include a welcome area with coats and bags and children's coat hooks were labelled with names and symbols. Imaginary play areas included a workbench and a kitchen/home setting with props. Materials and resources were organised and accessible to children from low open shelving labelled with pictures and print. A rest area defined by a soft mat and reading books was also available.

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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

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children and provide a safe environment. This was evidenced by observation of practice, a review of the environment and documentation, and through discussion with staff;

General Safety

- The entrance into the service was appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or children exiting the service unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was enclosed and secure.
- Cables and flexes were secured and out of children's reach.
- Cleaning agents were stored on a high shelf out of children's reach.
- Doors to storage spaces and presses were secured and inaccessible to children.
- Toys and play equipment were in good condition.

Infection Control:

- The premises, environment, equipment and materials were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Staff were observed cleaning and updated cleaning records were available.
- Lunch boxes that included perishable food items were stored in the fridge as required.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service's policy on medication.
- Medication was stored out of reach of children in a locked box and in its original container.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency escape routes and exits were unobstructed and clearly signposted.
- Children's attendance was recorded in a register in real time which supports a safe evacuation in the event of an emergency or fire.
- Fire procedures were displayed.

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Non-Compliance Information

The following measures were not in place to adequately safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children and provide a safe environment:

General Safety:

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0188.

Infection Control:

2. Two bins had open tops with no lids in place. The bins, which held waste, were used by adults and children in Room 1 and the Sanitary area. This poses a risk of cross contamination and foot-pedal operated bins are required for waste other than clean material for recycling.

Administration of Medication:

3. One of two fever reducing medications held by the service expired on 01 February 2025. It is acknowledged that the registered provider confirmed that this medication was not administered to children since its expiry.

Fire Safety:

4. There was insufficient evidence available to demonstrate that fire drills were completed in April and May 2026, which is a variance with the service's fire drill policy. This poses a potential risk of compromising the safe evacuation of children in the event of a fire or emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN0188.
2. The registered provider stated that the bins in use on day of inspection were removed. It was explained to staff to use the two small bins with foot pedals that are available in the sanitary area. A large bin with a lid was purchased for room 1 and will be used going forward.
3. The registered provider stated that the medicine was disposed of and its use discontinued.
4. The registered provider stated that a specific date and time was agreed on for fire drills at a staff meeting and that fire drill will be completed on the last Friday of every month which will facilitate discussion and reflection of the drill at staff meetings.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider.

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Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliances identified. The regulatory requirement has been met. This regulation will be assessed on next inspection.

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)
A person trained as a first aid responder was available to children at all times, as evidenced by a review of the staff sign in sheets. A current certificate of first aid responder (FAR) training was available for one staff member.

(2)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available.

(a) The first aid boxes were stored safely in conspicuous positions on shelves in both rooms.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to children 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 fire fighting 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.

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Compliance Information

(1)

(a) A record of fire drills was available, and the last fire drill was recorded to have taken place on 27 March 2026, as evidenced through a review of written records.

(4)

A notice of the evacuation procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location on a noticeboard in Room 2.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) Records were not available to demonstrate that the maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was completed in the previous 12 months, as required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

The registered provider stated that records were obtained from the building owner to demonstrate the maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms and that a request was made to owner to have these records available to the service as a matter of course.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met.