

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC042
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Name of Service:	Ballyhea Childcare Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Ballycoskery, Ballyhea, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P56 WR50
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Fitzgibbon
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork.
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Inspection undertaken by:	F. Collins
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Ballyhea Pre-school Limited is a sessional service located at the rear of Ballyhea national school in a new purpose-built premises. The premises consist of a single-story building with one large care room, one small quieter area off the main care room and a large entrance lobby. There are adult and children's toilet facilities, a storeroom, an office and a kitchenette.

There are two outdoor areas, one located to the rear of the premises and one to the front. There is dedicated parking to the side of the service.

The service is secured by high fencing with a keypad electromagnetic lock on the external gate to ensure the safety of the children.

A play-based service is provided to children between the ages of two and six years and the service is registered for provision of sessional services from 08.45-11.45 and from 12.00 to 15.00 daily. The service is only operating one morning session this year due to numbers attending. The service runs for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

There were three staff present on the day of inspection working with the children and these three staff were on the staff roster. The registered provider is not a member of the staff and is part of the voluntary committee that runs the service.

The service does not have relief staff and propose to use agency staff in the event relief staff are required.

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

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 service had a designated person in charge and a deputy, both staff were present on the day of inspection.
- (b) The designated person in charge or the deputy were on the premises during the operation of the service.
- (c) The staff were aware of the management structure within the service.
- (2) There were 3 staff employed in the service.
All three staff files were assessed.
- (a) All six references required were available from past employers. All six references were validated as required.
- (b) Not applicable as all references were available from past employers.
- (c) Garda Vetting was available for all three staff.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside of the country for greater than six consecutive months.
- (4) The three staff that work in the service all held a relevant qualification on the National Qualifications Framework at level 5 or above.

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 following policies were assessed for completeness:

- The policy on the administration of medication.
- The inclusion policy.
- The policy on authorisation to collect children.
- The healthy eating policy.

All policies assessed were up to date and in keeping with best practise.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The service had appropriate numbers of adults working directly with the children throughout the sessional service.
- (2) There were 17 children aged between two and four years attending on the day of inspection these children were cared for by three adults, one of whom was employed under the access and inclusion model scheme.

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) Seventeen children were in attendance on the day of inspection. Of those in attendance, 11 of the children's enrolment forms were assessed.

- (a) - (i) All 11 forms were completed with the details as required above.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- Snacks were provided by parents/ guardians and were eaten at snack time.
- The children were observed to toilet independently and staff were available to assist when required.
- The children who wished to opt out of activities could access the quieter area and sit with their peers on the couches or in the tent. In this area the children could access books from the library or rest with their friends. The service operated as a sessional service and did not provide sleep facilities.
- The care room temperature was recorded at 18.5°C , ensuring the comfort of the children in attendance.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The same adults cared for the children daily and a supportive relationship between the adults and children in the group was evident.
- The staff interacted with each other and supported the children's activities as required.
- Staff were observed to sit with the children during small group play and at snack time and provided support and engaged in conversation throughout.
- The service demonstrated a language rich environment where the staff spoke with the children in small groups and individually.
- The children chose their own play activities and interacted with their peers throughout. The children were observed to do arts and crafts and were gluing, cutting and drawing for their art activity.
- Communication with parents was face to face at the start and end of each session.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The following was observed on the day of inspection.

- The indoor play facilities consisted of one large playroom, one smaller play area, quiet room and the large entrance hallway, all of these areas were accessible to the children. There were toilet facilities accessible independently to the children.
- The care room had seven appropriate height tables with suitable chairs for the children who were observed to partake in tabletop activities.
- The shelving units and storage drawers where the activities and toys were stored were open and accessible to the children providing a variety of activities and allowed the children independent access to the activities and allowed them choice on what they played with.
- There was a selection of activities inclusive of arts and crafts equipment, jigsaws, shape sorters and building blocks and the children were observed to use these throughout the morning promoting sensory, fine motor and cognitive development.
- The rest area consisted of child height couches and a large tent with soft matting and cushions, which children were observed to use when chatting with their peers and taking a rest from activities.

OUTDOOR PLAY FACILITIES:

- The service had two outdoor play areas. The space at the rear of the premises was covered in soft play matting and had a large area that was covered from the rain and had tables and chairs, available for the children. There was access to a climbing frame and slide and a planting area.
- The area to the front of the premises was covered with concrete and this area had the sand tray, the water tray and a planting tray. Neither area was accessed on the day of inspection due to a heavy frost which had remained on the ground and where the water was frozen and the staff had assessed the surface as unsuitable and slippery.

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 external doors and the entrance gate to the service were secured by electromagnetic locks, this prevented any child gaining access to the road unaccompanied and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.
- The windows were secure with restrictive opening devices.
- There were no long glass doors in the service that the children could walk into.
- The toys and play equipment were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.
- There was no heavy equipment and furniture that could be pulled onto a child.
- The flexes and cables assessed were in good condition and were out of reach of the children.
- There were no blinds on the windows in the service.
- The storage facilities were inaccessible to the children and the waste was out of reach.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach and in the kitchen area which was locked.
- The outdoor area was secure and the soft matting was appropriate for the toys in use in the larger playground and where there was concrete the activities in that area were suitable for that surface.
- No hot drinks were consumed in the service close to the children.
- Foods such as grapes were appropriately cut to prevent choking.

Infection Control:

- The service was cleaned daily and weekly, there were signed cleaning schedules observed.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after going to the toilet, after painting and before snack time.
- There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels available at the children's toilets and at the sink in the care room. There was hot water, liquid hand soap and an electric hand dryer in the adult toilet.
- Hand towels were disposed of in the pedal operated lidded bin in the care room.
- Coats and bags were stored off the ground and did not pose a contamination risk.
- Snacks served to the children at snack time were stored in the fridge from time of arrival to the service to snack time.
- The tables were cleaned with disinfectant prior to the children sitting for their snack.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection. However, staff had a policy to follow in the event a child should require medication to be administered.

Fire Safety:

- The fire doors were unobstructed and were opened by push bar opening/door handle, these were released when the fire alarm sounded. This fire doors opened to both sides of the premises.
- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

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 registered provider ensured that at all times when the service was operating there was a person onsite with first aid training (FAR Training). Two staff in the service had first aid responder (FAR) training.
- (2) (a) There was an equipped first aid box on the premises and this was stored on the shelving unit near the main door.
- (b) The box was easily accessible to the 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record was maintained of all fire drills that took place on the premises, the last fire drill took place on 14.12.23. The records of monthly fire drills having taken place on the previous months were also available.
 - (b) The record of maintenance for the firefighting equipment was available and was completed on 10.07.2023. The record of the type and maintenance of the smoke alarms was available and this was last completed on 10.07.2023.
- (2) The records in relation to fire were open to assessment by the inspector.
- (4) There was an evacuation procedure notice displayed in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider insured the service to operate as a sessional service. The number of children included on the insurance was 22 pre-school children.

The expiry date of the insurance was 27.03.2024.