

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC060			
Name of Service:	Blackwater Childcare Company Limited By Guarantee			
Address of Service:	Rathcarrig Estate, Pike Road, Fermoy, Co. Cork			
Eircode:	P61 WR65			
Name of Registered Provider:	Joanie Mccarthy			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date(s) of Inspection:	13/04/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	50
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440			
Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. O'Reilly			
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

Blackwater Childcare is a registered community based early years service in operation since 2007. This service provides education and care to children aged from 1 to 6 years offering full day care service and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The current opening hours are from 7:30am to 6pm each day Monday to Friday.

The premise is located in a suburban estate in the outskirts of Fermoy town in Co Cork. The premise is a purpose built detached single storey building registered to operate three playrooms. Each of the spacious playrooms have their own designated outdoor play area to the rear and sides of the premise.

Staffing

There were 18 adults present in the morning on day of inspection and of these 13 adults were working directly with the children plus a third level student was on work placement. The staff working directly with the children all hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. Also present was the named person in charge, the deputy and two chefs. The registered provider is not serviced based.

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 inspections 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.

Additional Information

A referral was made to the County Fire Officer regarding a room that was developed into a sleep room for children over two years old attending the service.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, deputy, 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*

(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 named person in charge and a deputy that could deputise as required.

(b) The named person in charge and the deputy were present when the inspectors arrived at the premises and remained on duty until the end of the inspection.

(2)

The person in charge confirmed that two adults had begun working at the service since the previous inspection undertaken on 08/03/22, therefore recruitment records in relation to these adults were reviewed. The two adults were two third level students on work placement.

(a) There were two references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the adults.

(b) There were two references and required validations from sources other than past employers in respect of the adults.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the two adults.

(d) Not applicable as none of the two adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of six months or more while over the age of 18 years.

(4) The two adults were each third level students on workplace experience as part of their third level childcare qualification.

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,

Compliance Information

- (1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (2) On the day of the inspection, there was the person in charge, deputy, two chefs, and 13 adults and one student on work placement were working across the 3 care rooms in operation with 51 children present in the morning and 50 children present in the afternoon session. During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in each care room.

Toddler Room

On day of inspection there were 15 children in attendance in the morning and in the afternoon. Ten children were aged between 1 and 2 years and five children were aged over 2 years with four adults in attendance plus one student on work placement.

Preschool Room 1

There were 15 children in attendance in the morning and in the afternoon. All the children were aged between 2 and 3 years with 5 adults in attendance in the morning and four in the afternoon.

Preschool Room 2

There were 21 children in attendance in the morning and 20 children present in the afternoon session. The children were aged 3 years plus with 4 adults in attendance.

(8) (a)

On review of the staff roster there are always at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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)(a) to (i)

- A sample portion of 15 children's registration forms. were reviewed and found to contain the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The adults were observed to be caring in their interaction with the children and observed to be interested in the children's activities and listened and spoke to them using soft tones of voice and positive language.
- Children's behaviour was managed in a competent and positive way and the adults were observed to support the children and handle any minor behavioural issues promptly. The adults supported children to be sociable and respectful towards each other and spoke and listened to them in a calm and sensitive manner.
- Updates and information were furnished to parents and guardians at drop off and collection times and via the services electronic system.
- A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated through planning and having a variety of play and natural materials available to the children. Lots of positive interactive communication was observed between children and adults.
- Transitions were made as smooth as possible when children moved from their room to the outdoor play area whereby, they had access to age-appropriate play equipment and play materials.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- All food and snacks consumed on the premise is provided by the service. In-house chefs prepared and cooked the food in the services catering kitchen and the food was served to the children by the adults in the service They were served adequate portions of chicken, broccoli, mushrooms and potato at the dinner meal.
- It was observed that children were provided with appropriate cutlery and crockery at snack and mealtimes.
- The older children had access to potable drinking water from the cold tap located in the child size wash hand basins in the playrooms. There were disposable drinking containers located near the wash hand basins for the children.

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:

- Access to the main entrance door was adequately secured that prevented unauthorised access by an unauthorised person or exit by a child.
- The play materials, resources and equipment were in a satisfactory condition.

Infection Control:

- Playrooms, sleep rooms and communal areas were adequately ventilated by both natural and mechanical forms of ventilation.
- The children had access to sufficient toilets, wash hand basins and nappy changing facilities.

- The adults had their own designated toilets.
- A supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels were available throughout the service.
- A supply of cleaning agents and equipment was available in each room of the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The Toddler Room had a designated separate sleep room which were furnished with a number of standard cots with supported well-fitting mattresses. The rest needs of children aged under two years were facilitated in one designated separate sleep room beside the Toddler room. There were an adequate number of standard cots with well-fitting safety mattresses for children under two that required a sleep with individual accompanying bed linen.
- The older pre-school child's needs were met when stackable beds were set up in a separate designated sleep room for the children over two that required a sleep. There was a sufficient number of stacking beds available with designated suitable bed linen for children over two years who wanted a sleep while attending the service.
- It was observed when children were asleep, staff monitored the sleeping children.
- It was observed that sleep rooms were occupied with sleeping children throughout the inspection day catering for each child's individual sleep needs.
- It was observed when children were asleep there was adequate space provided between the cots and stacking beds in the designated separate sleep rooms.
- There was a rest area in each of the playrooms for children to relax or for children to opt out of activities for a while during the day.

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 number of staff had in date First Aid Responder certificate (FAR)

(2)

(a) The first aid boxes were safely stored out of children's reach in each of the rooms.

(b) The fully equipped first aid boxes were available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 13/04/23
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on the 03/04/2023 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 1/04/2023.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

- The services' insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of children covered which was 66, the start date, which was 27 March 2023, the end date, which was 28 March 2024 and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding, contents, public liability and fire and theft cover.