

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC359				
Name of Service:	Scribbles Playschool				
Address of Service:	Allen's Bridge, Newmarket, Co. Cork				
Eircode:	P51 VF63				
Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Dineen				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	04/06/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>11</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	11	PM	N/A
AM	11	PM	N/A		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick				
Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins				
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

Scribbles playschool is a privately run sessional service providing a 3-hour sessional service daily between the hours of 09.30 and 12.30, Monday to Friday. The service operates the Early Childhood Care and Education programme for 38 weeks of the year and runs Easter camps and summer camps when possible.

The service is located approximately four kilometres from Newmarket in North Cork in a rural area and is run mainly from the outdoor area and has access to the indoor premise which as stated by the registered provider is used in extreme weather conditions. The premises consist of one large playroom with adjacent sanitary facilities for both staff and children.

Staffing

The service is currently run by the registered provider singlehandedly with support available when needed. There is an adult named as an emergency contact person should the need arise for support.

The adult in the service holds an educational award at level 6 on the National Qualifications framework.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1), (2) & (4)

Regulation 10

Regulation 11 (1) & (3)

Regulation 15 (1)

Regulation 19 (1)(a)

Regulation 23

Regulation 25 (1) & (2)

Regulations 26 (1)

Regulation 28

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, 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge. The service is run single-handedly.
 - (b) The registered provider was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to two staff employed in the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were available for both adults that may work in the service.
 - (d) Not applicable as neither adult that works or may work in the service have lived outside of the country for greater than six consecutive months in another country.
- (4) The registered provider holds a Level 6 qualification in Early Childhood Education and Care. The second staff member was the emergency contact person or worked as relief support on a supernumerary basis only, this person did not hold an early years care and education qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)/(b) Of the four references required none were available onsite this posed a risk of staff not being suitably vetted prior to them having access to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) Two validated references have been received from past employers.

(b) Two references have been received from sources other than a past employer. The registered provider has stated all staff files will be checked frequently to ensure they contain all requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a) / (b) References as indicated above have been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met.

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 policy was assessed:

The Infection control policy contained the required elements to guide safe practice in the management of infection.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The Healthy eating policy was assessed, and it did not indicate how the perishable items contained in children's lunches would be managed. Therefore, leading to unsafe practices where the perishable items contained in children's lunches were not refrigerated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has updated the policy to include that all food brought into the service will be refrigerated from arrival until snack time. The registered provider has also committed to reviewing and updating as required the healthy eating policy annually.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. The healthy eating policy has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have 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.*
- (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, there were adequate adults available for the direct care and supervision of the children.
- (3) The adult/child ratios observed during the inspection were as follows:
There were two adults directly caring for eleven children in attendance.

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)-(i) The information required as indicated in (a) –(i) above was available for eight of the children in attendance.

The information as indicated in (a) –(g) & (i) above was available for a further one child.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a) –(i) The information as indicated above was not available for two children in attendance on the day of inspection, these children were in the service for a settling-in session prior to starting in the service in September.

(h) The immunisation status of one child was not recorded on their records which were available to the staff in the service.

Not having information regarding the children may hinder appropriate care being delivered or information being shared with parents/guardians as appropriate.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The registered provider has stated all forms are now completed. The immunisation forms will be updated before the children commence in September.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) The enrolment forms for the children who were in the service on the day of inspection have been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for the regulation as assessed on inspection have been met.

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 which were provided by parents/guardians and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included sandwiches, crackers and cheese, fruit and yogurt.
- Water was available to the children throughout the day. Each child had their own water bottle or where this was not available the registered provider had a jug of water and glasses available for each child.
- The children were observed accessing the toilet area when needed and assistance was given by staff as required. It was observed where each child was reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- There was a soft seating area inside for children to rest. Children could also sit a relax in the cabin in the garden area or in the old car on a mattress as needed.
- The children had the scope of the garden to play in and their movement was not restricted at any time.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

- During snack time the staff moved between the children to help and support them. The children sat outside for a picnic in the sensory garden for their snack.
- The children were given sufficient time to finish their snacks without being rushed.
- The atmosphere in the service throughout the inspection was observed to be relaxed and pleasant, with no child rushed in their activities and were assisted when needed. Each child was encouraged to be self-sufficient, but help was offered when needed particularly around the gluing activities.
- Parents were spoken to at drop off and collection where the activities of the day were discussed as needed. Parents were welcomed onto the premises and got the children's coats and bags as needed.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing, questioning and helping the children with their chosen activities. Examples of this was accessing dress up clothes and painting activities for the younger children.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The outdoor play environment consisted of a large garden with several different play spaces.
- The spaces included a concreted area that was covered by an awning and there the tables and chairs set up. Children were observed to complete tabletop activities in this area inclusive of arts and crafts, painting and building blocks.
- There was areas covered in grass that was long or short, where there was planting of fruit and vegetables, shrubs and fruit trees. These areas allowed for private spaces for the children to play in.
- There were other areas covered in bark much where the slides, swings and climbing frame was used by the children to promote balance and develop through risky play.
- The stone covered sensory garden had a hammock, tree stumps being used as chairs where story time was held and had some playhouses and a kitchen area for imaginary role play. The children could access this area from multiple sides and played there under the tree.
- The large sand area was used by the children to dig and pretend to be builders.
- The children had access to multiple ride on toys of tractors, balance bikes and cars which promoted balance and gross motor development. There were wheelbarrows for the movement of grass and sand which promoted coordination.
- The cabin had play activities inclusive of a drum set was heard being used throughout the session.
- The playroom had suitable resources available to the children. There was a rest area and consisted of a day bed and armchairs and this area had books available to the children, should the children require to rest and relax. The equipment and play activities were stored on low and accessible shelving.
- The children were also observed using the tunnel to climb through and a hill where the children were observed to roll off.
- The disused car was available to the children and was accessible by a small step for all children to gain access. There were child seats at the steering wheel and a mattress in the back to allow children to rest but also congregate in small groups as observed.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Staff supported children to engage in activities and especially support was offered to the younger children who were attending to settle into the service.
- Staff encouraged children to participate in story time and in naming the days of the week.

- The programme of activities was only to schedule, arrival and departure and snack time, all other activities were carried out when a suitable time arrived. Stories were told prior to the children going home.

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 gate to the side of the premises was secured on arrival to the service. This prevented the children exiting while unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and were free from pinch and crush points.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Sharp items such as scissors were noted to be stored out of reach of the children.
- All high units were secured and were not in danger of being pulled down.
- Hot drinks were not consumed in the service during its operation.
- There was no television or other wall mounted equipment that might fall in the service.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children, with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste.
- The care room was well ventilated with windows openable for adequate air exchange. However, the children spent all the time on the day of inspection outside.
- Children's coats were stored off the ground on hooks preventing them from becoming contaminated.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to the children on the day of inspection.
- Temperature reducing medication was stored out of reach of children and was in date.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- The firefighting equipment was safely stored in a secure press at the fire exit door.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The electric cable from a charger and for the printer under the window were accessible to the children and posed a choking risk to the children should they access these wires unsupervised.
2. One of the ride-on toys assessed had broken pedals with the plastic covers off and the bolt accessible, posing a risk if a child should graze or injure their leg against the bolt. A similar issue was evident on the last inspection on the 16.05.2023.

Infection Control:

3. A cleaning schedule was available however was not completed for the sanitary facilities. Not ensuring that records to indicate the cleaning completed may indicate ineffective cleaning of the premises and lead to contamination and potential cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The printer has been removed from the windowsill and the children no longer have access to the electric cable. The registered provider has stated new shelving will be erected at a height not accessible by children to store any electrical items.
2. The broken toy outside has been removed, and the morning checklist will now include that all outdoor equipment must be checked.

Infection Control:

3. The registered provider has committed to ensuring that the cleaning will be completed daily and will be completed daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A photograph of the window with the printer removed has been received.
2. The morning safety checklist has been received.

Infection Control:

3. The cleaning schedule has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met.

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 had in date first aid (FAR) training and was available onsite during the operation of the service.
- (2) (a) (b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available on the premises and was easily accessible for use should the need for same arise.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

- (3) (a) The registered provider ensured that no person was allowed enter the premises unannounced.
- (b) A record of visitors to the service was maintained by the registered provider.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) All children that were in attendance in the service were not signed in. Three of the eleven children in attendance were not signed in. Not ensuring there is an accurate record of the children in attendance at any time may hinder the safety of the children should the service need to be evacuated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The registered provider has committed to ensuring all children will be signed in on arrival and has a roll book in place for use.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A copy of the attendance book has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation as assessed has been received.

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

- (4) The fire drill notice was beside the fire exit door.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Records of fire drills were available however the last fire drill took place on 05/03/2025. Throughout this academic year it was noted that for three months fire drills were not completed. Not completing fire drills monthly may hinder or delay the appropriate evacuation of the service in the event of a fire.
- (b) The fire alarm system was last serviced in November 2023, and the fire extinguishers were last serviced in June 2023. Not ensuring fire alarms and firefighting equipment is serviced on an annual basis may lead the equipment not working properly in the event of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (a) A further fire drill was completed prior to the end of the academic year and the fire drills have been planned in advance for 2025-2026 academic year.
- (b) The fire alarm system was serviced on 22.07.2025. the registered provider has state that this alarm will be service annually and for service in July 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) (a) The schedule to ensure fire drills are completed monthly has been received.
- (b) The fire service certificate has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation have been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was adequately insured. The service was insured to operate as a sessional service with a maximum of 22 children. The expiry date of the insurance was recorded as 27/03/2026.