

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC406 |
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| Name of Service: | The Bessborough Centre Creche |
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| Address of Service: | Bessborough, Blackrock, Cork, Co. Cork |
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| Eircode: | T12 EN29 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Dr Calem De Búrca |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 18/06/2024 |
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| Date 2 of Inspection: | 19/06/2024 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 93 | PM | 71 |
| Day 2 | AM | 95 | PM | N/A |

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork |
| Inspection undertaken by: | D Prendergast |
| 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

N/A

Description of service

The Bessborough Centre Creche is registered to offer a choice of sessional, part time, or full day care to children aged 0 to 6 years, along with school age care. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday through to Friday, over a 38-week annual period. The service is open from 8.00am to 6.00pm daily and operates 51 weeks of the year. Play based pedagogy is implemented.

The early years service is provided from a single-storey, purpose-built premises and two adjacent buildings, on the grounds of Bessborough, in Blackrock. There are eight operational care rooms in total, each of which is equipped with adjoining sanitary facilities for children. Three designated sleep rooms are accessible for children's use and the building also includes an office, a computer room, a staff room and staff sanitary facilities. There are two main outdoor play spaces onsite, as well as several smaller fence-enclosed outdoor play areas.

Staffing

There are 32 adults attached to the childcare facility, including the registered provider who is not based at the setting. Twenty-eight adults are employed to work directly with the children. This includes one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. In addition, one of the two persons in charge is available to cover in the care rooms, as required. Each of these 29 adults have either attained a recognised award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or hold a Letter of Eligibility to Practice/ Letter of Qualification Recognition. One Community Employment (CE) participant is also involved in the care of the children and the second person in charge is office 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following rooms: Caterpillar, Ladybird, Butterfly, Bumble Bee, Grasshopper 1 and Grasshopper 2 and did not include the Starling or Humming Bird rooms.

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 person in charge, deputies, staff and children who were present on the days 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) Two persons in charge were responsible for overseeing the day-to-day operation of the service. Two deputies had been appointed to deputise, in the event of their absence.
 - (b) On the first day of inspection, one of the deputies was working at the service upon the inspector's arrival. The person in charge returned shortly afterwards and was available to facilitate the remainder of the inspection.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of all 32 adults attached to the service were assessed for compliance.

- (a) Thirty-six of the 64 required written and validated references had been provided by past employers.
 - (b) The remaining 28 required written and validated references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 32 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Fourteen records of police vetting were held in respect of 12 of the adults, who had resided in other jurisdictions for periods of six consecutive months or longer, while over the age of 18. Suitable translations into English were also provided, where applicable.
- (4) Documentation on file confirmed that 25 of adults, who were involved in the direct care and education of the children, held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications, or as recognised by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). A Letter of Eligibility to Practice or a Letter of Qualification Recognition had been attained by four of the adults. A qualification was not required in respect of the registered provider, the second person in charge or the CE participant.

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 service's Outings policy was reviewed and deemed satisfactory.

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) On both days of inspection, there was an adequate amount of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.

(2) Correct adult to child ratios were observed in all care rooms on the first morning of inspection, as follows:

| Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Caterpillar (10 months – 1 ½ years) | 6 | 2 |
| Ladybird (1 – 2 years) | 12 | 4 |
| Bumble Bee (2 - 3 years) | 21 | 4 |
| Butterfly (3 - 5 years) | 22 | 3 |
| Grasshopper 1 (4 -5 years) | 14 | 2 |
| Grasshopper 2 (3 - 4 years) | 8 | 1 |

In addition, 10 children aged 4 to 5 years, from the Starling room, went on an outing with 4 staff members.

Children who usually attended the Hummingbird room were accommodated in the Butterfly and Grasshopper rooms.

In the afternoon, the overall adult to child ratio met the requirements of the regulation, as follows:

| Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Caterpillar (10 months – 1 ½ years) | 6 | 2 |
| Ladybird (1 – 2 years) | 12 | 2 |
| Bumble Bee (2 - 3 years) | 21 | 4 |
| Butterfly (4 - 5 years) | 14 | 3 |
| Grasshopper 1 (4 -5 years) | 11 | 2 |
| Grasshopper 2 (3 - 4 years) | 7 | 1 |

Sufficient adult to child ratios were also ensured on the second morning of inspection, on 19 June 2024:

| Room Name and Age Range of Children | Number of Children Present | Number of Adults Present |
|--|----------------------------|--------------------------|
| Caterpillar (10 months – 1 ½ years) | 8 | 3 |
| Ladybird (1 – 2 years) | 12 | 3 |
| Bumble Bee (2 - 3 years) | 22 | 4 |
| Butterfly (4 - 5 years) | 8 | 1 |
| Grasshopper 1 (4 -5 years) | 11 | 2 |

| | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|
| Grasshopper 2 (3 - 4 years) | 7 | 1 |
| Starling (4 – 5 years) | 9 | 1 |
| Humming Bird (3 – 4 years) | 8 | 2 |

In addition, 10 children aged four to five years, from the Butterfly room, went on an outing with 3 staff members.

(8)

(a) The service was operated with a minimum of two adults present at all times, as noted at the time of inspection and through review of the staff roster.

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)

Basic needs:

- The children's meals were appropriately timed, so that there were no gaps longer than three hours in between; the inspector was advised that breakfast was usually between 8.00am and 9.00am, followed by the mid-morning snack at approximately 10.00am. On the first day of inspection, lunch was observed at 12.15pm and an afternoon snack was offered shortly after 3.00pm.
- During mealtimes, younger children were accommodated in high chairs or low-level feeding chairs and were provided with bibs. Adults were noted to ensure appropriate supervision and were readily available to offer assistance as needed. In one of the older care rooms, a chatty atmosphere was evident and children were allocated helper tasks, such as handing out water bottles.

- During discussion, staff confirmed that nappy changing was attended to at frequent daily intervals and as the need arose. Toilet trained children were observed to access the toilet facilities in an independent manner.
- Children in the Caterpillar room were observed to sleep at various times throughout the morning. During subsequent conversation with a staff member, the inspector was advised that needs led sleep was facilitated for children, in combination with scheduled sleep periods.
- Care rooms were furnished with cosy areas, which met the children’s need for rest and relaxation.
- Adequate space was provided within the indoor environments for the children to freely explore their chosen activities and interest items. The children also had opportunities to play in the wider outdoor area.

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 entrance gate to the service was fitted with a buzzer entry/intercom system, which reduced the risk of unauthorised access. Exit from the premises through the same gate was via a high-level release button, which minimised the likelihood of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- Outdoor play environments were secured by a combination of fencing, walls and secured gates.
- Colourful adhesives were in place on glass panel doors, which reduced the risk of a child sustaining a collision injury. In the Ladybird room, the wooden steps which led to the fire exit door were fitted with visibility strips.
- Safety clips were in use to safely anchor blind cords.
- Low-level cupboards within the children’s reach were secured, which reduced the risk of a child accessing potentially harmful items.

Infection Control:

- Dispensable liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins. The children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play, before eating and after using the toilet facilities and a staff member was noted to wash her hands before serving lunch to the children.

- Suitable storage was provided for the children's toiletries, such as nappies and wipes.
- Disposable aprons and gloves were worn by adults when carrying out nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed during the course of the inspection.
- Prescribed medication that was held at the service, was noted to be clearly labelled, in-date and was stored out of the children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- During a scheduled rest period in the Bumble Bee room, a staff member was observed to carry out physical checks of the children as they slept. Information in relation to each child's breathing, colour and position was then inputted into an online application. Tablet devices with access to the same application were also in use in the other care rooms.
- In the afternoon, the air temperature of the Caterpillar sleep room was recorded at 20.6°C, while occupied by sleeping children aged over 12 months. This fell within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C, for safe sleep practice, for children within this age group. Air temperature readings of 20.7°C and 22°C were taken in the two Ladybird sleep rooms, while said rooms were in use by children aged one to two years.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were free from obstruction.

Outing:

- An outing from the service took place on both days of inspection. A suitable Outings policy was in place and was implemented in practice; the person in charge confirmed that written consent for children to go on said outings had been obtained and presented the inspector with an example of a signed permission slip.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Warm running water was unavailable at the wash hand basins in the sanitary facilities adjoining the Grasshopper 1 and Grasshopper 2 care rooms. Water temperature readings of 16.9°C and 17°C were recorded in the Grasshopper 1 sanitary facility and the water temperatures at the wash hand basins in the Grasshopper 2 sanitary facilities were noted at 17.1°C and 17.2°C. Cold water temperatures may impede effective handwashing.

- A total of 26 cot mattresses, located between the Caterpillar sleep room and the two Ladybird sleep rooms, were not waterproof or fitted with waterproof mattress protectors, as required to reduce the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

- Air temperatures within some of the designated sleeping areas were not consistently maintained within the recommended range, for safe sleep practice. In the Caterpillar sleep room, an air temperature of 21°C was recorded on the morning of 18 June 2024, while the room was occupied by a sleeping child, aged under 12 months. Later the same day, an air temperature of 23.1°C was taken in the Bumble Bee care room, while this room was in use to facilitate a designated rest period, for children aged 2 to 3 years. It was acknowledged that staff took steps to lower the temperature, once alerted to the elevated temperatures and that subsequent temperature reading of 20.6°C in the Caterpillar sleep room and 21.6°C in the Bumble Bee care room were taken.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The written reply stated that the maintenance team have fixed the taps and that the wash hand basins now have a supply of hot and cold water. The Infection Control policy was also discussed at all room team meetings and at the team leader meeting. As a preventive measure, staff will be reminded on how to report any maintenance issues and how to prioritise them and daily risk checks will be undertaken.
- Waterproof mattress protectors have been purchased for all cots.

Safe Sleep:

- In her written response, the person in charge outlined that all steps necessary to maintain the recommended temperature levels in the Caterpillar sleep room and in the Bumble Bee room were taken; additional room ventilation was ensured by opening doors and window and these steps will continue to be applied. An additional reminder was communicated to all staff in relation to the temperature readings in the sleep rooms and in the care rooms. Staff will open doors and windows early each morning and will carefully monitor room temperature readings throughout the day. The policy on safe sleep was discussed at all room team meetings and at the team leader meeting.

As a preventive measure for all of the above, it was stated that creche management will ensure that all aspects of the service are reviewed and assessed to ensure the safety of the children attending. Creche management will reinforce awareness of existing policies in the service to all staff and service users.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Written correspondence from the maintenance manager, confirming the completion of the repair work and a copy of the Infection Control policy.
2. A copy of the receipt for the 26 waterproof mattress.

Safe Sleep:

3. A copy of the service's Safe Sleep policy.

Summary Comment

Based on the statements and evidence submitted, regulatory compliance is determined to 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 available certification demonstrated that three of the adults who worked at the service had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
- (2)
- (a) First aid boxes were accessible to the adults in each of the care rooms. Overall, adequate supplies were maintained.
 - (b) The first aid supplies were consistently available, should they be required for use.

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 firefighting 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) The monthly fire drills which had been conducted were recorded in writing. It was noted that the children and staff had undertaken a fire drill on 20 May 2024.
 - (b) Details were available regarding the number and type of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms. According to the servicing documentation, the firefighting equipment was last checked in May 2024 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 6 May 2024.
 - (4) Notices, which outlined the steps to be followed in the event of a fire, were displayed in the care rooms and in the main office. Fire evacuation plans were also on display.