

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE078		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Bubbles Playschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Saint Conaires National School Tullyvarraga, Shannon, Co. Clare		
<b>Eircode:</b>	V14 FX20		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Emma Bowen		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	04/12/2023		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM 6
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A. McCarthy		
<b>Title:</b>	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

## Description of service

Little Bubbles Playschool was established in 2008 as privately owned, sessional service, in Saint Conaires National School, in Shannon town. A programme of care and learning is facilitated Monday to Friday in two sessions from 08:50 to 11:50 and 12:05 to 15:05 for children ranging in age from two to six years. This service operates in one open plan room in a prefabricated structure behind Saint Conaires National School building. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the prefabricated structure.

## Staffing

On the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 the registered provider and three members of staff worked directly with the children in attendance. The staff held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications. The staff demonstrated engagement in continuous professional development.

## 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. 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 members of 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 and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider was available throughout the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available and reviewed by the inspector. The findings included the following:

(a)

Five written and verified past employer references were available.

(b)

Three written and verified reference were obtained from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four adults employed by the service.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as the adults present had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held qualification ranging from level 5 to level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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)  
The registered provider ensured that the children attending the pre-school service were supervised at all times.
- (3)  
On the 4<sup>th</sup> of December 2023 the minimum ratio of adults caring for the children was maintained at all times. Three adults worked directly with the twenty children in attendance in the morning and the six children in attendance in the afternoon.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

*(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*

*(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

### Compliance Information

(1)

Enrolment forms were available for the number of children registered in the service. These forms were reviewed and detailed the required particulars outlined in (1) (a)-(i).

(3)

The children's registration forms were open to inspection in the service.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records referred to in paragraph (1) are retained for a period of two years after the children cease to attend the service.

### 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 of the Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff demonstrated respect and warmth towards the children in their care, using soft and gentle tones of voice, positive language and engaging with the children at their level. During observed interactions, staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's individual interests, needs and learning interests. Staff interacted warmly with the children, listening carefully to their stories and questions, responding to them with interest and providing regular praise and encouragement throughout the session.

The children were supported to be independent, according to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, caring for their belongings and retrieving their lunches. Free-play activities predominated for the duration of inspection and the children had access to plenty of free space to move around both indoors and outdoors and the children were free to select which activities they chose to engage with. Children's language development and communication skills were supported through the positive and on-going conversations, repeating rhymes and songs observed during the inspection. The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their meal in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Lunchtime was observed to be a sociable occasion for the children who sat and conversed amicably with their peers.

##### Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environment featured a range of developmentally appropriate toys, equipment and play materials suitable for the age range and number of children in attendance. The indoor play setting was a bright and colourful space which was decorated to reflect the children's sense of identity and belonging. The wall space was used to display children's artwork, literacy and numeracy aids and emotion posters.

The layout of the preschool room was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with. There was plenty of clear floor space to enable the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and tabletop activities. The outdoor area was accessible directly from the preschool room to the rear of the service. This area had a grassy surface, and a soft synthetic surface, the surrounding perimeter was enclosed by fencing and a gate and externally by the school yard and a gated entrance. The play area offered a suitably resourced space for the children to freely move and engage in physical, pretend play and learning.

### 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:

- Both internal and external access to the service were appropriately secured by a bell operated system.
- The outdoor areas were secured by fencing and a gate.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded in a logbook.
- Cleaning agents and medication were secured appropriately out of reach of the children.

##### Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- Running warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded bins were available in the sanitary facility.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals.

##### Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider demonstrated a good knowledge in relation to the safe administration of medication in the service. Documentation was available should prescription or non-prescription be required to be administered to a child.

## Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point was readily identifiable to the rear of the service.
- The service completed monthly fire drills to prepare for evacuation of the service in the event of a fire.

## Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are not undertaken by the service.

## 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 a record of up to date First Aid Response training.

(2)(a)

(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible position in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

## 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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last fire drill took place on the 13<sup>th</sup> of November 2023.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place consecutively on the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2023 and the 25<sup>th</sup> of January 2023.

(4)

A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI – Safety

### Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 27th of March 2024.