

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE124		
Name of Service:	Scribbles Preschool/Montessori		
Address of Service:	Ballyveskill, Tiermaclane, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 AP8E		
Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Stackpoole		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	16/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy		
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

Description of service

Scribbles Preschool/Montessori was established in 2015 as a privately operated sessional facility in a rural area, west of Ennis, County Clare. The childcare facility operates Monday to Friday and is currently operating from 09:10 to 12:10. The play-based programme of care and education is facilitated in a large open plan room in a purpose-built, single-storey building to the rear of the owners domestic dwelling. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side and rear of the building.

Staffing

On the 16 June 2025 the registered provider and a second adult cared for the children in attendance. The registered provider works directly with the children and provides an administrative role.

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.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28- Insurance

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 staff member 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 person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2)

Two files were available in respect of the registered provider and the adult working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Three written and validated references from past employers in respect of the adults working in the service were available.

(b)
One written and validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of one adult working in the service.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)
International police vetting was not required in respect of the adults working in the service as they had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualification at Level 5 and Level 8 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 16 June 2025 the ratio of adults caring for the children was maintained at all times. Two adults cared for the nineteen children attending the sessional programme of care and education.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. The children transitioned from the open plan care room and outdoor play area.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a caring and respectful manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during conversations. The adults praised and encouraged the children, listened attentively, used soft tones of voice and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent during play and learning activities, whilst caring for their belongings, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner while the children used the toilet. The children were supported individually and as part of a group by the adults. The adults demonstrated a good understanding of the children's personal interests, preferences and capabilities.

The children engaged in a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities. The children transitioned from open ended play-based activities in the indoor environment. These activities included playing with tractors, trucks, building magnetic tiles and jigsaws, playing with small animals, dolls, blocks, and pretend play in the home and shop areas. The children accessed and looked at their individual learning journals which displaying their individual artwork, photographs of completed activities and stories. Open ended discussion and songs took place among the group and with the adults. Mealtime was observed to be an unhurried and sociable occasion whereby the children conversed amicably with their peers and the adults. Parents provided healthy food and beverages for the children. After mealtime the children transitioned to the outdoor environment to engage in gross motor activities. Activities included pretend play in the fire station and mud kitchen area, construction activities in

the pebble and bark section, riding bicycles, playing on the ride on vehicles, ball games, rocking toys and the slide. The children were observed to enjoy all the morning activities.

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 was secured with an electronic gate, video surveillance and locked doors to protect the childcare attending the childcare facility.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service and were supervised at all times during the inspection in the indoor and outdoor environment.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Photographic illustrations of hand hygiene techniques were displayed over the wash hand basins to prompt children to wash their hands.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, after using the toilet and on return from outdoor play and before mealtime.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually on rails and shelving.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The registered provider demonstrated an awareness of the administration of medication policy.
- Documentation was available for the adults to use should medication be administered in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The two fire exits were clear from obstruction.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable at the front of the building.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are currently not undertaken by the childcare facility.

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)

An adult had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

Two suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in an accessible and conspicuous area in the service.

(b)

The first aid boxes were available in the care room 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

(4)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Records were not available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place in January 2025.

(b)
Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)
(a)
Documented schedule for monthly fire drills printed for the year and kept in reception with reminders scheduled as prompt to complete. A fire drill was completed on the 17 June 2025.

(b)
The maintenance will be completed yearly. The maintenance service of the fire-fighting equipment was completed on the 17 June 2025. The maintenance service for the smoke alarm system was completed on the 15 August 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)
(a) Copy of the completed fire drill record.
(b) Copy of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance records.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers response the non-compliances found under Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b) are resolved.

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. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.