

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CW006
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ballon Rathoe Community Childcare Facility LTD
-------------------------	--

<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballon Childcare Facility, Ballon, Co. Carlow
----------------------------	---

<b>Eircode:</b>	R93 A9D0
-----------------	----------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michael O'Toole
-------------------------------------	-----------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	18/06/2025
----------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	90	PM	59
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Norma Thornton Lorraine O'Connor
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Ballon Rathoe Community Childcare service is a community built childcare service located in the village of Ballon in northeast county Carlow. The service offers full day, part-time and sessional childcare services for children aged 0 to 6 years of age. It operates from a purpose-built premises comprised of five preschool classrooms and two school aged classrooms in the main building and two additional preschool classrooms located in the adjacent purpose-built wooden building. There is a designated kitchen for food storage and preparation, a children's dining room, and two sleep rooms on the ground floor of the main building.

The onsite outdoor play areas are comprised of one large soft play surface area to the front of the building and four soft play areas at the back of the building. An all-weather half size pitch and play area for older children is located on an elevated first floor area which can be directly accessed from the fire escape bridge from the first-floor classrooms.

### Staffing

There are 35 adults employed in the service, including the designated person in charge and three kitchen staff. The registered provider does not work in the service. Since the last inspection on 30 July 2024, one new staff member has been employed in the service. All staff members, who as part of their role in the service are employed to work directly with the preschool children hold qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 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 regulations 9,11,19, 20, 23, 24 and 29; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 9, 19.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included all preschool classrooms in operation on the day of inspection and the outdoor play areas.

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 Fire Officer on the 18 July 2025 due to potential fire safety risks within the service.

### Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the designated person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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

(2) Through discussion with the registered provider and staff members, it was confirmed that one new staff member was employed since the last inspection on the 30th of July 2024.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file.

(c) The Garda vetting disclosure was available for review. The renewal of Garda Vetting was not required for any staff member within the service as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required.

(3) It was determined that these were obtained and considered prior to employment.

(4) Evidence was available on inspection to demonstrate that the staff member held 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.

### 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

(2)

The required minimum adult to child ratios were observed to be maintained as follows.

**The Baby Room:** In the morning, there were 8 infants aged between 1 to 2 years being directly cared for by 3 staff members, for a full day care service. In the afternoon, there were 4 children directly cared for by 2 staff members.

**The Wobbler Room:** In the morning, there were 13 children aged 2 to 3 years directly cared for by 3 staff members. In the afternoon, there were 8 children present with 2 staff members.

**The Toddler Room:** In the morning there were 16 children aged 2.5 to 3.5 years directly cared for by 3 staff members.

In the afternoon there were 15 children aged 2 to 3 years directly cared for by 3 staff members.

A fourth staff member who was not rostered to be on duty arrived onsite for one hour during lunch break.

**Playschool 1:** There were 18 children aged 3 to 6 years of age directly cared for by 3 staff members and in the evening 12 children were directly cared for by 3 staff members.

**Playschool 2:** In the morning there were 13 children aged 3 to 4 years directly cared for by 3 staff members and in the afternoon, there were 12 children directly cared for by 3 staff members.

**Preschool 1:** In the morning there were 15 children aged 4 to 5 years directly supervised by 3 staff members.

In the afternoon there were 8 children aged 4 to 5 years directly cared for by 2 staff members.

**Preschool 2:** In the morning there were 7 children aged 4 to 5 years cared for by 1 staff member and in the afternoon this classroom was not in operation.

There was an additional staff member available to relieve for staff breaks or to help in any of the classrooms where support was required throughout the morning.

(8) Through a review of staff rosters and discussions with staff members, there are at least 2 adults on premises at all times.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)

While the adult to child ratio within the service was maintained, an adequate number of adults were not available within the baby room during the inspection, considering the needs and care routines of the children in the baby room.

During the inspection, an additional adult was required to support the staff members working directly with the children to carry out their duties including administering first aid and the completion of accident and incident records. In discussion with the registered provider, it was outlined that an additional adult was usually available, however, was not within the service on the day of inspection.

(2)

It is noted that the adult to child ratio was maintained in the Wobbler room during the morning and afternoon. However, between 12.50pm to 1.30pm, during lunchtime, the adult to child ratio was not maintained in the Wobbler room. At this time, there were two adults caring for 11 sleeping children and two awake children aged 2 to 3 years. The minimum adult to child ratio for a child aged 2 to 3 years is 1 adult to 6 children.

This was found non-compliant on inspection on 30 July 2024, and through the Corrective and Preventive Actions (CAPA) process the service submitted actions to address the non-compliance. These actions have not addressed the adult to child ratio within the Wobbler room during lunchtime.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted the following corrective and preventive actions.

Baby Room- Floating staff member rostered daily to provide support.

Cover procedure in place if floating staff absent.

Daily checks by Room Leader/Manager to ensure ratios and support are maintained.

Person Responsible: Room Leader and Manager

Timeline: Immediately

Wobbler Room

Rotas adjusted to ensure a third staff member is present during 12.50–1.30pm.

Lunch cover schedule introduced, floating staff allocated as needed. Weekly rota reviews to ensure compliance with ratios.

Person Responsible: Manager. Timeline: Immediately

PIC to carry out monthly ratio audits in all rooms. Any non-compliance recorded and addressed immediately with corrective action.

Person Responsible: Person in Charge (PIC). Timeline: Immediately.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

### **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*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### **Compliance Information**

#### **Basic Care Needs**

Children were responded to promptly by staff in relation to their individual care needs. Younger children had nappy changing carried out regularly and intermittently as required. Children were supported with potty -training and toileting and where appropriate children's independence with toileting was promoted with staff helping if any difficulties arose. During these care times, staff were observed to be sensitive and positive with the children and used these times as opportunities for warm one to one interaction. This was reflective of the service's behaviour management policy which outlined that staff adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the child.

Children demonstrated that they had learned the importance of handwashing and were spontaneous and confident in washing their hands post toileting and outdoor play and prior to snack times and meals. Younger children were assisted with handwashing.

Children bought snacks from home which were stored in a refrigerator in each of the classrooms. The children in the Baby room brought food from home for dinner time, while the children from other rooms were provided with a hot main meal by the service. There was a three-week menu plan in place in the service which was reflective of the food provided to the children on the day of inspection. The main meal of the day was provided from 11:30 and comprised of fish, mashed potato, carrots and peas. Custard was provided as an optional dessert and fresh drinking water was readily available. These practices were in line with the service's healthy eating policy.

On the day of inspection, the children's snacks were observed to be healthy in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Children were observed to have a selection from the following -crackers, sandwiches, cold meats, cheese, yogurts, rice cakes and fruit.

In each of the classrooms a drinks station was provided where children were able to easily access their drinks bottles. During mealtimes, staff members were responsive to the children and their needs. Through warm conversations and reassuring facial gestures between staff members and children, mealtimes were observed to be enjoyable. This practice was described within the service's behaviour management policy which outlined the role of staff members in assisting children to foster and develop friendships with other children. Mealtimes were observed to be calm and unhurried with children eating at their own pace. For example, the staff members in the baby room supported children during mealtimes to develop the skill of self-feeding. While the staff members in the Wobbler room provided support to children as required, and the children were provided with the opportunity for self-feeding using age-appropriate cutlery. This was reflective of the service's healthy eating policy which outlined that children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development. The practices of staff role modelling to support children's learning was outlined within the service's behaviour management policy.

The children in the upstairs preschool rooms 1 & 2 went to the dining room for their main meal while the children in the wobbler and toddler room enjoyed their snacks and meals in the dining area incorporated in their classroom. All other classrooms had their meals in their classrooms.

Staff were observed to promptly respond to children's cues for a rest or sleep and ensured children were appropriately placed in their designated cots or stackable beds appropriate to their age with suitable fitted sheets and cellular blankets if required.

### Supporting Relationships

Children were observed to be comfortable in their physical environments demonstrating confidence and familiarity with the staff caring for them. Children were forthcoming in asking staff who the inspectors were and why they were present in the service. Staff reassuringly explained the purpose of the inspection and children went back to enjoying their activities and play.

During mealtimes staff sat and chatted with children promoting a positive social experience and enjoyed the opportunity for children to express news from home or plans that they had for the weekend. The service's graduation ceremony was planned for the following evening post the inspection and children were eager to demonstrate the preparations that they and the staff had made for the ceremony.

Parents were observed dropping and collecting their children from classrooms speaking with staff and receiving feedback on how their child's day had been.

Children's achievements and interests were warmly recognised by staff members throughout the inspection. For example, In the Baby room a child walked towards a staff member holding up a toy car. The staff member excitedly responded to the child 'Yay, what did you get a car?' The child responded with noises and smiled at the staff member and played with the toy car on the table for a few moments. And in the Wobbler room, a child was singing, the staff member heard the child and responded, 'that is a lovely song'. The child smiled at the staff member and continued singing.

### Physical Environments

Children's individual pieces of creative work were displayed, with the most senior classes incorporating their creative projects into their preparation for their impending graduation ceremony.

The two classrooms in the adjacent wooden cabin contained all new equipment and play materials which had been purchased when it opened in January 2024 which created inviting and stimulating physical interest areas.

The outdoor play environments contained a variety of play equipment such as slides and ride on equipment in some of the play areas at the back of the building, an all-weather ball pitch and playground equipment on the raised play area. In the play area at the front of the building, there was a playhouse, large sand box, balance beams, child sized seating and a spacious area for children to run and ride their tricycles and balance bikes.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### Basic needs

1. The children attending the baby room were not provided with an opportunity for outdoor play on the day of inspection. Through discussion with staff members, it was outlined that the children attending the baby room do not engage in outdoor play daily. This was at variance of the service's outdoor play policy which stated that outdoor play was an important part of the daily curriculum at the service and that children play outdoors every day for a minimum of 30 minutes. This non-compliance was previously identified on inspection on 28 August 2023.

#### Supporting Relationships and Interactions around Children.

1. The service's behaviour management policy outlined that the social and physical environment is stimulating, challenging and interesting for children and is focused on their active engagement and involvement. However, the practices observed within the Wobbler room between 12.15pm to 1.30pm was at variance of the service's policy as did not cater for the two awake children. The daily routine of the care room was outlined by the staff member which was that that 11 of the 13 children attending the room were provided with an opportunity for sleep after dinner time.  
  
The two awake children were directed to get a book from the cosy corner after dinner. The staff member present was engaged in cleaning duties, the children appeared bored. The two awake children were not provided with an activity or additional resources during this time.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following corrective and preventive action were submitted by the registered provider.

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Daily timetable revised to include minimum 30 minutes outdoor play for all baby room children (weather permitting). Indoor physical play alternatives provided during unsuitable weather.

Staff reminded of outdoor play policy; Room Leader to document outdoor play daily. Manager to carry out weekly audits of daily logs to ensure consistency.

Person Responsible Room Leader and Manager. Timeline: Immediately.

Awake children to be provided with meaningful activities (small-world play, puzzles, art, sensory trays) during rest time. Resource box for quiet play now available daily.

Staff training completed on active engagement during rest time.

Room Leader to monitor rest-time practice weekly; management to conduct monthly spot checks.

Person Responsible; Room Leader and Manager. Time Frame: Immediately

PIC to review outdoor play and rest-time practices monthly.

Findings to be recorded; any non-compliance addressed immediately with corrective actions documented.

Person Responsible: Person in Charge. Time Frame: Immediate

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

### **Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service**

#### **Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play**

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

### **Compliance Information**

Since the last inspection on 30 July 2024, both sleep rooms had air conditioning units installed which comfortably maintained the sleep rooms between the required temperatures of 16-20 °C for children under a year old and 18-22°C for children over one year. There were two designated sleep rooms in the service, one sleep room adjacent to the baby and wobbler room and another sleep room adjacent to the toddler room.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

(1)(a)

1. While the physical environments of the two cabin classrooms were observed to be very well equipped with defined interest areas, play equipment, materials and resources, the inspectors observed that the remaining classrooms required investment in their physical environments and lacked play material and resources. This was particularly noticeable in the Baby, Wobbler and Toddler room which lacked supplementation of the interest areas and age-appropriate equipment.

For example,

- a. In the Wobbler room, the supporting materials and equipment for the kitchen area were stored on a window ledge which was out of reach of the 13 children.
- b. Natural or open-ended materials were not available for the children. The play equipment consisted of plastic toys and equipment. This does not provide children with materials to provoke curiosity, exploration or a sense of wonder.
- c. The battery-operated materials in the Baby and Wobbler room were not in working order. For example, play phones, light up equipment and cars within both rooms did not work.

The inspectors acknowledge that the service has engaged with the early years quality initiative and staff explained that this was currently a work in progress with improving the physical environments.

2. Based on the age and stage of development of the children in the Baby and Wobbler room, the equipment which was provided for their mealtimes was not suitable. The service's healthy eating policy recognised mealtimes as a social experience for children and staff members. It stated that, where possible, children and staff eat together and that age and stage appropriate equipment is available for children.
  - a. There were three highchairs available for the nine children aged 1 to 2 years in the Baby room. In discussion with the three staff members within the baby room, additional highchairs were not available for the children at this time. This did not allow for the children to eat their meals together.
  - b. The equipment provided for mealtimes within the Wobbler room was not suitable based on the age and stage of development of the children. On the day of inspection, there were 13 children aged 2 to 3 years present, and the following was observed:
    - i. Six children ate their dinner in a highchair,
    - ii. Five children ate their dinner at a table. During this time, the six children's legs were in front of the table as the table was too low to fit underneath.
    - iii. Two children sat in a wooden chair with an adjoining tray.
- (b)
3. Suitable facilities for rest and/or sleep were not available for children within the Baby and Wobbler room between 12.10pm to 1.30pm. Between 12.10pm to 1.30pm, the nine children aged 1 to 2 years in the baby room and two of the children in the Wobbler room did not have access to sleep facilities in the event where they may require sleep or rest. There was one designated sleep room available with nine standard

cots and two low level sleep beds for the nine children aged 1 to 2 years in the Baby room and for thirteen children aged 2 to 3 years in the Wobbler room. For example:

- a. Staff members in the Baby room explained that the children generally sleep in the morning time. In discussion they explained that if a child from the baby room required a nap between 12.10pm to 1.30pm that they would need to wait until one of the children attending the Wobbler room woke up. They outlined that this posed challenges on some days.
  - b. In the Wobbler room between 12.10pm to 12.30pm, 9 of the 11 children were brought to the sleep room. In discussion with a staff member, it was outlined that the remaining 2 children aged 2 to 3 years were provided with an afternoon nap as there was no cot available for them at this time.
4. Within the Toddler room, the rest area was not inviting as it consisted of a soft mat with no additional soft furnishings to invite children to relax.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following corrective and preventive actions were submitted by the registered provider.

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

Additional play resources, natural/open-ended materials purchased and introduced. Battery-operated toys repaired or replaced. Play equipment stored at child-accessible height.

Monthly environment audits by Room Leaders to ensure resources remain stimulating and suitable.

Person Responsible: BOM -Room Leaders and Managers. Timeline: 1-3 months.

Additional highchairs purchased for Baby Room. Child-sized tables and chairs introduced in Wobbler Room.

Staff reminded of mealtime policy as a social experience. Monthly equipment checks by Room Leaders; Manager reviews compliance with policy during monthly observations.

Person Responsible BOM – Room Leaders and Managers. Timeline 1-3 months.

Additional cots and low-level beds ordered. Rest schedules revised to meet individual children's needs.

Weekly checks by Manager to always ensure adequate facilities.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time Frame: 1-3 months.

Added soft furnishings (cushions, rugs, beanbags) to create a calm and inviting space.

Room Leader refreshes and monitors rest area weekly.

Person Responsible: Person in charge. Time frame: 1-3 months.

Additional play resources, natural/open-ended materials purchased and introduced.  
 Battery-operated toys repaired or replaced. Play equipment stored at child-accessible height.  
 Monthly environment audits by Room Leaders to ensure resources remain stimulating and suitable.  
 Person Responsible: BOM -Room Leaders and Managers. Timeline: 1-3 months.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

### **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 childcare service was surrounded with a high wrought iron fencing to the front and right-hand side of the building, which wrapped around to the rear of the building where a high green metal fence and cement walls secured the perimeter of the premises.

The front main entrance gate, side entrance gates and main entrance door were all secured with a coded keypad system, the code of which was only known to the staff.

A CCTV system and the large clear glass windows allowed the manager and staff to view any parents/ visitors approaching the service. This helped to prevent any unauthorised person from entering the premises and reduced the risk of any child from exiting the premises unsupervised.

#### **Infection Control:**

There was an adequate number of toilets and hand wash basins available for both the staff working in the service and for the children.

In the senior classrooms the children were observed to be aware of the importance of handwashing post toileting, messy and outdoor play and prior to mealtimes.

The handwashing practice of staff members was reflective of the service's infection control policy. The staff were observed to wash their hands frequently post attending to the children's personal needs and prior to helping the children with meals.

Cleaning schedules were available for review in each classroom and were recorded to date.

Perishable foods which children brought to the service including yogurts, meat and cheese were refrigerated in containers with the child's name on it. This was in line with the service's healthy eating policy which outlined that foods which children bring to the service are fully labelled with the child's name in containers suitable for refrigeration.

### **Administration of Medication:**

No medication was observed to be administered in the service on the day of inspection. In discussion with staff members, child centred medication plans had been devised for children who were prescribed emergency medication. In discussion with the staff, the inspector found that staff were clear on the procedures to follow and the administration of emergency medication if required. Emergency medications were safely stored in a first aid cabinet secured to the wall which was out of the children's reach.

### **Safe Sleep:**

Staff remained present within the sleep rooms while children slept. Physical checks were carried out by staff on sleeping children at ten-minute intervals and documented.

### **Outing:**

The service had an appropriate outings policy in place in the service however do not operate any outings away from the service apart from the older children going from a walk with staff through the adjacent community garden.

## **Non-Compliance Information**

### **General Safety:**

1. The vinyl floor covering at the rear exit door of the Wobbler room into the outdoor area, was torn and the solid cement floor underneath was observed to be crumbling. This could cause an adult or child to trip and fall.
2. The slide in the outdoor area which was in use by the thirteen children posed a pinch risk for the children. The plastic at the base of the slide was cracked. This was at variance to the service outdoor play policy which stated that a daily risk assessment is carried out and any broken items are removed.
3. In the play area at the front of the building and in the three soft play areas at the back of the building, the inspectors observed gaps in the patterned edges of the soft play surfaces. Noticeably the soft play

surfaces in the three play areas at the back of the service were wider and deeper, approximately two inches deep and two inches wide. These gaps pose a trip hazard to a child or adult.

This non-compliance was previously identified on inspection on 04 October 2024.

4. The inspectors observed that the first windowsill to the right of the main entrance door posed a risk of injury to children playing in the front outdoor play area if they were to fall against it and suffer a physical injury.
5. There were dangling electrical wires, which had not been secured following recent works, in the passageway used by children to access the play areas at the rear of the building.
6. The service did not take measures to ensure that equipment was anchored appropriately to reduce the risk of injury. The low-level table in the baby room and a shelving unit in the Wobbler room were unsteady.
7. The highchairs in the baby room were not used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance. The straps for the high chairs were not accessible due to a cover used on the high chairs and as a result, were not used by the staff members while children sat in them during the mealtimes. This posed a potential fall risk to a child.
8. A child aged 18 months in the baby room was observed to be placed into a piece of equipment on two occasions during the inspection which was not suitable for their age and stage of development. The equipment was not used in accordance with the manufacturer's guidance which stated it is for children who are not yet walking. This was at variance with the service's accident and incident policy which stated that only suitable and age-appropriate materials and equipment are available to children.

### Infection Control:

9. The rubbish bin in Playschool 1 had a broken lid, posing a risk of spread of infection in the service.
10. Children's hands and faces were wiped using baby wipes following dinnertime in the Wobbler room. This was at variance with the service's infection control policy which stated that warm water and soap is used for handwashing.
11. The six high chairs used by the children in the Wobbler room appeared unclean with food debris embedded on the trays.
12. Play equipment was stored within the Wobbler room nappy changing area. And, children's personal items, including bags were stored within close proximity to the nappy changing area. This posed an increased risk of cross contamination.

13. The floor cushion in the Wobbler room was torn. This did not allow for effective cleaning and posed a risk of the spread of infection.
14. Children's soothers in the Wobbler room were stored within individual children's cubbyholes and not in sterile containers. This posed a risk of contamination.

### Safe Sleep:

15. It is acknowledged that staff members carried out and recorded physical checks on each sleeping child's sleep position, colour and breathing while they were asleep.  
However, at 1.20pm, three children aged 2 to 3 years old slept with their mouths covered with a blanket or comforter. The staff member was requested by the inspector to remove these items from the children's faces. This posed a risk as the children's breathing or skin colour could not be clearly observed by the staff member carrying out the sleep check.

### Fire Safety:

16. While it is acknowledged that the service-maintained records of monthly fire drills carried out in the service and the annual maintenance checks of the fire alarm system and firefighting equipment in the service, there was no clearly documented fire exit pathways displayed in each classroom.
17. The presence of two gates at the top of the stairs leading to the first-floor classrooms in the main building posed a potential risk of obstruction to the fire exit pathways for children and staff to safely exit the service in the event of a fire.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

The following response was submitted.

Vinyl flooring and underlying cement will be repaired/replaced by contractor. Weekly maintenance checks will be introduced to identify hazards.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time Frame: 1-3 months.

Slide will be removed from use and replaced with safe equipment.

Daily outdoor checklist will be updated to ensure damaged items are removed immediately.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Timeframe: Immediate.

Damaged surfacing has been repaired. Quarterly inspection of surfaces will be carried out going forward.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time frame: ASAP (weather permits)

Protective padding will be installed. Play zones will be repositioned.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time frame: 1 month.

Corrective action was taken immediately, and the windowsill has been fitted with appropriate safeguards to eliminate the risk of injury to children in the outdoor play area.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time frame: Immediate.

Wires will be secured permanently by electrician.

post-works safety sign-off will be required before reopening areas.

Person Responsible: BOM Manager and Maintenance. Time Frame: 1 month.

Furniture will be anchored securely. Stability checks will be conducted quarterly.

Person Responsible BOM Manager and Maintenance. Time frame 1 month.

Highchairs will be fitted with manufacturer-approved straps. Staff will be retrained. Spot checks during mealtimes will be carried out weekly.

Person Responsible: Room Leader and Manager. Time Frame: 1-3 months.

Equipment will be removed. Monthly suitability review of all equipment will be implemented.

Person Responsible: Room Leader. Time Frame: 1-3months.

Fire exit pathways will be displayed in each classroom. Fire safety audits will be carried out monthly.

Person Responsible: Manager. Time Frame: 2 weeks

Gates will be removed/replaced with compliant alternatives. Fire safety consultant will review environment annually.

Person Responsible: Manager and Person in Charge. Time Frame: 1-3 months

### **Infection Control:**

The following response was submitted by the registered provider.

Bin will be replaced with a new covered bin.

Person responsible: Manager. Time Frame: Immediate.

Liquid Soap and warm water handwashing will be carried out. Refresher staff training on infection control will be scheduled.

Person Responsible- Room Leader and Manager

Training Scheduled-Immediate.

A deep cleaning rota will be established. Cleaning schedule will be signed off daily

Person responsible Room Leader. Time Frame - immediate.

Equipment will be relocated. Additional storage will be provided.

Person Responsible: Manager. Time Frame: 1-3months

Cushion will be discarded and replaced. Weekly soft furnishing checks will be carried out.

Person Responsible: Room Leader. Time Frame: 1-3months

Sterile soother containers will be introduced for each child. Staff will be instructed on correct storage.

Person Responsible: Room Leader and Manager. Time Frame: Immediate.

### Safe Sleep:

The following actions were submitted by the registered provider.

Refresher training on safe sleep will be carried out. Weekly spot checks on sleep practices will be introduced.

Person Responsible: Manager. Time Frame: Immediate

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the padded windowsill.

Photographic evidence of the repaired outdoor surface.

#### Infection Control:

No supporting documentation was submitted.

#### Safe Sleep:

No supporting documentation was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

## 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 designated person in charge and staff ensured that no person other than a preschool child attending the service, persons dropping or collecting a child, employees or unpaid workers could enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.

(b) There was a visitors record book present, which any visitors to the service were required to complete once authorised entry by a staff member.

The record maintained the date of entry, person's name, contact number, reason for entry, staff member approving access and check in and out times.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) While it is acknowledged that staff were observed to check in and out children within the service, the following was observed by the inspectors on the day.

On review of the attendance records in the Wobbler room at 12.30pm, the records were not reflective of the children present within the room at the time. There were 13 children present within the room, and there were 10 children marked as present. The inspector advised the staff member present and the records were updated. It is noted that the attendance record was reviewed at 4pm and it was reflective of the children present.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The following response was submitted.

Staff will be reminded that attendance records must be updated in real time as children arrive, leave, or move rooms.

A daily attendance check-in procedure will be introduced:

Room Leaders will check records three times daily (morning, midday, afternoon).

Any discrepancies will be corrected immediately and reported to management.

Staff will receive refresher training on Tusla attendance recording requirements.

Manager will carry out weekly spot checks to ensure accuracy across all rooms.

Non-compliance will be documented and followed up with additional staff support or retraining.

Person Responsible: Room Leaders and Manager. Timeline: Immediate.

PIC will review attendance records during monthly audits to ensure compliance is maintained.

Person Responsible: Room Leader and Manager. Time Frame: Immediate.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation was submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions submitted are appropriate to the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

## **Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements**

### **Regulation 29 - Premises**

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### **Compliance Information**

- (1)
- (a) The designated person in charge reported that there were no issues with the structure of the building.
  - (b) The inspectors observed that the premises had measures in place to ensure that the perimeter and building itself was safe and secured with the surrounding high walls, railings, coded security system and CCTV surveillance.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

- (c) The recommended temperature of 18 - 22°C was observed not to be maintained at the following times.
  1. On two occasions at 16:10 hours and 16:20 hours the inspectors observed that the room temperature in the baby room was 24.5°C and 25.7°C. The inspectors observed that the staff encouraged the children to participate in an activity in an area of the baby room where a gentle breeze was blowing through an open window. It is acknowledged that the outside temperature on the day was 25 to 27 °C and that staff ensured the children were dressed in the lightest minimal clothing and frequently encouraged to drink water.

2. The mechanical ventilation system in place in the baby room's nappy changing facility was inadequate as the foul air in the nappy changing room was not being extracted efficiently from the room.

(d) The service was not maintained and repaired, as required. The following was noted.

1. The inspectors observed that there were cobwebs and black stains on the tiles on the back right hand corner of the dining area in the toddler room. The black mould, which the staff present acknowledged, had previously been observed on the previous inspection on 30 July 2024. The actions submitted by the registered provider did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliance.
2. In the wobbler classroom, the walls and skirting boards were not maintained and required repairs. The inspectors observed that paint was peeling from the wall and the paint on the skirting boards was chipped with exposed wood with areas of flaked paint which could not be effectively cleaned.

(e) 1. While it is acknowledged that the management have made improvements to the nappy changing areas provided for the younger children on the ground floor, it was observed that on the first floor of the main building the children present did not have access to all the toilets available.

There were two toilets and two handwash basins accessible to the children in both preschool classrooms of which the maximum capacity of children is 30 in total. A wooden gate prevented access to the additional sanitary facilities that are provided further down the corridor. The recommended number of toilets and handwash basins in a preschool service is 1 toilet and handwash basin: 11 children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

The following corrective and preventive actions were submitted.

Temperature monitoring will be carried out every 2 hours and recorded.

Fans, blinds, and ventilation will be used to regulate indoor temperature during hot weather.

Policy will be updated to include staff action when external temperatures exceed recommended levels.

Person Responsible: Room Leader. Time Frame: Immediate.

Professional deep clean and treatment will be carried out to remove mould. Damp prevention plan will be introduced with quarterly checks.

Person Responsible: BOM and Manager. Time Frame: 1- 3months.

Peeling paint and exposed wood will be repaired and repainted with wipe- clean, child-safe paint.

A rolling maintenance programme will be implemented across all rooms.

Person responsible: BOM, Manager and Maintenance Committee. Time Frame: 1-3 Months

Access to additional toilets down corridor will be reinstated (removal/repositioning of gate).

A plan will be developed to ensure required ratios of toilets/handwash basins (1:11 children).

Daily checks will be carried out to ensure facilities remain accessible.

Person Responsible: BOM Manager and Person in charge. Time Frame: 1-3 months.

Manager will introduce monthly environment checks covering temperature, ventilation, hygiene, and maintenance. PIC will audit sanitary facilities quarterly to ensure compliance.

Any non-compliance will be recorded and addressed immediately.

Person Responsible: Manager and Person in Charge. Time Frame: Immediate.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

## **Part II - Registration and Register**

### **Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances**

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

*(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.*

### **Non-Compliance Information**

(1)(3)

On arrival to the service the designated person in charge confirmed to the inspectors that the registered provider named on the Early Years Inspectorate national register of preschool services was no longer in position. While a person has been appointed to replace them, this change was not notified to the Early Years Inspectorate Change

in Circumstance department. A change in circumstances application form was not submitted to the Inspectorate regarding the change in registered provider.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

We are currently in the process of submitting all the required documentation and information for the board members as part of the notification of change in circumstances. The submission process is well underway, and we are nearing completion. All relevant updates and supporting documents will be provided to TUSLA once the process is fully finalised. We have put a clear process in place to make sure any future changes are notified to TUSLA on time. A specific person has been assigned to oversee this, and we will keep a checklist and reminder system to ensure all updates are sent without delay.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supportive documentation was submitted.

## Summary Comment

The actions submitted are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.