

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY060		
Name of Service:	Darndale/Belcamp Integrated Childcare Service Ltd.		
Address of Service:	Darndale/Belcamp Village Centre, Dublin 17, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D17 YY96		
Name of Registered Provider:	Ciaran Mulhall		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	94	PM 46
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson and E. Hosford		
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable Not applicable.

Description of service

Darndale Belcamp Integrated Childcare Service is a full day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 17 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 157 children aged 0 to 5 years old, Monday to Friday from 8.30am to 5.00pm.

The service operates from the ground floor of a mixed-use building. The service has 11 care rooms, eight of the care rooms are located in the main building premises: Little Stars, Rug Rats, Teddy Bears, Clever Cats, Honeybees, Twinkle Toes, Wizards and Garden Room along with a cot room, a kitchen, two offices, indoor play area, a sensory room and a soft playroom. In the secondary prefabricated building within walking distance of the main building premises, there are three care rooms: Pixie Room with a cot room and kitchen, Active Learners room with a sensory relaxation room and a kitchen and Little Explorers room with a kitchen.

There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area in the main building, and a play area to the front of the prefabricated building. The service also use an enclosed public playground which is within walking distance of the premises.

Staffing

Darndale Belcamp Integrated Childcare Service directly employs a total of 53 staff, including the person in charge who manages the oversight of the service, seven staff who assist with the administration of the service; 42 staff who work directly with the care of the children, a maintenance person, a cleaner and a cook. There are also a further 12 staff who are employed through the Community Employment scheme who work in the service and are undergoing training. These include staff who work with the children, and auxiliary staff.

There were 48 staff present on the day of the inspection and three students.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3), (4),(7) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2),(9) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1)(j)(k) Records in relation to the Preschool Service
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 24 Checking in and out and record of attendance
- Regulation 27 Supervision
- Regulation 31 Notification of Incidents

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 9(7) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 16(1)(j)(k) – Record in relation to Preschool Service
- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 27 Supervision

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Honey Bee and Wizards rooms, and did not include the Clever Cats, Teddy Bears, Little Stars, Rugrats, Twinkle Toes, Garden, Little Explorers, Pixies or Active Learners Rooms. Regulation 11 was inspected across all 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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered as a result of a statutory notification of an incident received to the inspectorate on the 22 March 2024.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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

(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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

(2) The following was reviewed:

- Thirteen full files, including four students and nine adults who were new to the service since the last inspection held on the 27 February 2024.
- Fifty-six Garda Vetting disclosures.

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a)(b) Twenty-six validated written references were available from recent past employers or a source other than a past employer for the 13 full files reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 69 declarations reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that three adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

(4) The six staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

(7)(a) The registered provider ensured all adults in the service were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information and training. For example:

- Documentary evidence was available that all adults had received information on a recent update on the Health and Safety policy and procedures within the service. Staff reported they were aware of these updates.
- The inspector's reviewed a sample of documentary evidence of recent staff meetings, rooms meetings and one to one supervisions and new staff inductions.

This was in line with the service policies on Recruitment, Staff Training and Development and Performance Appraisal.

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.

(9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were 35 staff available to the 94 children in the morning and 17 staff to 46 children in the afternoon.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection with a breakdown in the morning as follows:

In the main building:

- Little Stars - 3 adults to 9 children aged 2 years old.
- Rug Rats - 3 adults to 6 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Teddy Bears - 2 adults to 7 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Clever Cats - 3 adults to 10 children aged between 2 - 3 years old.
- Honey Bees - 2 adults to 8 children aged between 2 - 3 years old.
- Twinkle Toes - 3 adults to 8 children aged between 2 - 3 years old.
- Wizards - 4 adults to 13 children aged between 3 - 4 years old.
- Garden Room - 3 adults to 8 children aged between 3 - 4 years old.

Prefabricated Building:

- Pixies - 3 adults to 8 children aged between 10 -14 months old.
- Active Learners - 5 adults to 10 children aged between 4 - 5 years old.
- Little Explorers - 4 adults to 7 children aged between 4 - 5 years old.

The breakdown in the afternoon was as follows:

In the main building:

- Little Stars - 2 adults to 7 children aged 2 years old.
- Rug Rats - 2 adults to 4 children aged between 1-2 years old.
- Honey Bees - 2 adults to 7 children aged between 2 - 3 years old.
- Twinkle Toes - 3 adults to 7 children aged between 2 - 3 years old.
- Garden Room - 3 adults to 9 children aged between 3 - 4 years old.

Prefabricated Building:

- Pixies - 3 adults to 5 children aged between 10 -14 months old.
- Active Learners - 2 adults to 7 children aged between 4 - 5 years old.

(9) Students who were present on the day of the inspection were not included in the adult: child ratios of the rooms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent.

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(j) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication. Following a review of a sample of 10 records, the following was observed:

- Five records did not have a parents' signature acknowledging that the child had received the medication.
- One record did not have the signature of a second staff member who witnessed the administration of the medication.

Full records, including witness and parents' signatures following administration must be maintained in order to support the safe administration of medication.

(1)(k) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was consistently maintained for accident and incidents. Following a review of 25 records, the following was observed:

- Five records did not have a parent's signature acknowledging that they had been informed of the accident or incident.
- Seven records did not have the date included with the parent's signature where they acknowledge they had been informed of the accident or incident.

Full records, including signatures and dates must be maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(j)(K)

Corrective Action

Full records, including signatures and dates will be maintained.

The staff team were updated regarding the inspection and reminded to fill in record forms completely. A memo was sent to staff on which included “all accident and incident files and medicine records must have staff and parent’s signatures, dates from all parties and witness signatures (for medicine)”.

A follow up room meeting was held.

Preventive Action

Staff will be reminded to complete all forms fully. Record forms will be checked periodically by management to prevent non-compliance in the future.

Supporting Documentation Submitted

Memo to staff

Room meeting notes

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been adequately addressed.

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-

(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

(1)(b) Appropriate and suitable care practices were observed, as evidenced by the following:

- Children were provided with regular and adequate food on the day of the inspection. A hot meal of lasagne with garlic bread was served for dinner, with a fruit platter, yogurt, cheese and crackers for tea. Documentary evidence showed meals provided were regular and varied, with a four-week menu plan available. Children with alternative diets and preferences were catered for.

Mealtimes were observed to be pleasant experiences for the children. Staff were observed to sit and eat with the children, and children were supported to eat their meal at their own pace.

- Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely and respectful experiences for the children. Staff called for cover immediately when a nappy required changing in the Honey Bee room, and the nappy changing experience was observed to be respectful. A child was observed to be given privacy while using the toilet, with the staff member providing appropriate supervision and support when required.
- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful, warm and sensitive manner. Appropriate verbal and nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch, using the child's name and other strategies were observed. These strategies can facilitate emotional and social development in young children.
- The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children. For example, staff discussed the choice to participate, and the timing of these activities, and how alternative activities were provided. Appropriate activities following the interests of children can promote independent decision making and foster meaningful play experiences.
- Daily routines were available and were reflected in practice. Routine provides for comfort and predictability, which can promote a sense of security.
- Sleep was observed to be led by the needs of the child. Two children in the Honey Bee were invited to sleep, and another child who displayed signs of tiredness was asked if they would like their soother, and they were facilitated to rest immediately.
- Engagement with parents and families was facilitated through conversations at drop off and collection. Information such as updates on the service was shared via leaflets, and staff reported that they would spend time to discuss and clarify any queries regarding updates from the service when required at drop off and collection. A meeting space was available for one-to-one meetings with families. This engagement can promote a sense of welcoming and belonging for young children and their families.
- All children had the freedom to move throughout their care room and access toys and equipment independently. Outdoor play was accessed on a daily basis and appropriate outdoor clothing was available in order to access outdoor play in inclement weather.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The information recorded in the 'need to know' forms which were available in the care rooms did not clearly detail important information on the care, supervision and strategies required in the care rooms regarding children who had additional care needs to ensure that the children's safety and welfare was maintained. It is acknowledged that this information was recorded in support plans; however, this information was not readily available to new staff or students who require access to this information when in the care rooms where these children attend.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

A new need to know sheet has been developed with the staff team which includes noting children who have additional risks associated with their care from the room. This is hanging in all rooms and in the offices and kitchen to ensure that all staff are aware of important information on the care, supervision and strategies required in care rooms regarding children who have additional needs and to ensure that the children's safety and welfare is maintained.

Preventive Action

The need to know forms will be discussed with new staff and students at induction stage and are the same for each room to ensure that everybody has a strong understanding of their meaning.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated need to know forms.

Photographic evidence of forms displayed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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

The registered provider ensured the following measures were in place to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- The entrance to the main building had an electronic automatic door system in place, which was operated and managed by reception staff. The entrance to the prefabricated building was an electronic door release system, with key, which was managed and operated by staff.
- Internal doors throughout the premises had handles and latches up high out of reach of children.
- There were low level safety gates by the Wizard and Garden rooms which restricted access to the communal play space in the hallway.
- The outdoor play space by the main building and the prefabricated building were fully enclosed.
- A record was maintained of all accidents and incidents that occurred in the service.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing was completed after outdoor play and before meals and liquid soap and thermostatically controlled warm water was available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff in the Honey Bee room reported bed linen was washed on a daily basis, and low beds were observed to be positioned with appropriate space between them while children slept in order to support effective infection control.
- The premises appeared to be a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Nappy changing was observed to be in line with appropriate infection control practice.

Safe Sleep:

- A log was maintained where the temperature of the room and the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children was checked every 10 minutes.
- The temperature of the Honey Bee room while children slept was maintained at the recommended ambient temperature of 18-22 °C for children over one year old.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed and there were fire evacuation routes displayed throughout the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Loose cables from an internet modem, and phone cables were accessible to the children in the calm area of the Active Learners room. These posed a risk of injury. It acknowledged these cables were secured and fixed to the wall during the inspection.
2. Cleaning agents were not stored safely out of the reach to the children, a disinfectant spray bottle was observed to be accessible to the children in Wizards room.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

3. Effective handwashing practice was compromised in the Honey Bee room. The electric paper towel dispenser was not working, and the roll paper towel in use was not hygienically dispensed and required repeated hand touch. This increased the risk of cross contamination.
4. Items were observed to be stored in sanitary accommodation in the following areas:
 - Art and crafts materials were stored on an open shelf, and a coat was hanging from the door in the toilet off the Honey Bee room.
 - Childrens blankets were stored on the open shelf in the nappy changing unit in the nappy changing area used by the Honey Bee room.

This increased the risk of cross contamination. Only items for use in sanitary areas must be stored there.

5. The following increased the potential risk of cross contamination in the sanitary accommodation off the Wizard room:
 - A toilet training seat was observed to be stored on the floor.
 - The toilet roll was not hygienically dispensed.
6. The waste disposal system in the Wizard room was not foot pedal operated and the children and staff were observed to repeatedly touch the lid of the bin. This increased the risk of cross contamination.
7. The ventilation units in the toilet area and nappy changing area used by the Honey Bee room had a build-up of dust and debris on the vents. This could prevent the ventilation unit to work effectively.

Outing:

8. Outings to the public playground which is not adjacent to the main building were not in line with safe practice or the service policy on outings. The following practices were observed:
- There was no risk assessment in place.
 - Staff did not bring the items detailed in the outings policy such as service mobile phone, first aid kit, list of parents contact details. There was no checklist available for these items.
 - A review of records of recent outing to the playground showed the outings were not in line with the ratio of one adult to three children as specified in the service policy on outings.

Appropriate safeguarding measures must be in place when children leave the premises.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective action

1. This had been secured on inspection.
2. The cleaning agent bottle was removed from Wizards room.

Preventive action

1. A memo was sent to staff to ensure they report any loose or hanging wires to maintenance.
2. A memo was sent to staff to remind them that all cleaning products must be stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

Corrective actions

3. The hand towel dispenser in Honey Bees was fixed (a battery replaced).
4. All items were cleared from Honey Bees sanitary accommodation.
5. A hanger was put up for the children's toilet training seat in Wizards room. The toilet roll dispenser was fixed.
6. Wizards room was reminded to use the foot pedal bin in the bathroom after handwashing.
7. The ventilation units in the changing area and toilet were cleaned properly.

Preventive actions

3. A memo was sent to staff to remind them to notify maintenance if hand towel dispensers are not working.
4. A memo was sent to all rooms reminding the team not to store items in the sanitary areas and that only items for use in the sanitary areas are to be stored there. This was reiterated in room meetings.

5. A memo was sent to all rooms reminding them to hang toilet seats on hangers.
6. A memo was sent reminding staff to report if toilet roll dispensers were not working. This was reiterated in room meetings.
7. A memo was sent to all staff to remind them to use the foot pedal bin. This was reiterated at room meetings.

Outing:

8. Corrective action

A new outings policy has been written with the support of the team; a new sign in/out form for outings has been designed and is in place; back packs have been provided to each room with the essentials for all trips; a risk assessment form is available to check and confirm before each outing.

Preventive action

The outings policy is in place and staff sign in and out at reception for all trips. The immediate local area is now deemed a trip also (the Village square; DCC playground; school grounds etc) and this is in the revised policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence

Memo to staff

Room meeting notes

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence

Memo to staff

Room meeting notes

Outing:

Photographic evidence

Memo to staff

Room meeting notes

Updated Outing Policy

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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

(1) There was documentary evidence available to demonstrate that each child attending the service had been checked in and out.

(3)(a)(b) A record was available of all visitors to the service, where details of the date, name, contact details, reason for entry, check in and out times, and approval of access was maintained.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were observed to be appropriately supervised throughout the inspection within the care rooms, sleep rooms, sanitary facilities and outdoors. For example:

- Staff were observed to complete head counts when moving with children from their care room to another part of the premises.
- Details of the children were recorded on a 'fire sheet' to accurately record the number of children transitioning from one area to another.
- Staff were observed to be carefully positioned in the outdoor play area in order to ensure adequate supervision of the outdoor play environment.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

(e) The registered provider ensured a notification of an incident was submitted to the inspectorate within the required timeframe.