

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY173
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Name of Service:	Queen B's Creche, Montessori and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Lock Keepers Walk, Royal Canal Park, Ratoath Road, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D15 Y761
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernadette Hill
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	28/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin and T. Nelson
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.
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Description of service

Queen B's Crèche, Montessori and Afterschool service provides a full day, part time, sessional service to children aged 0 to 6 years old. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.30pm Monday to Friday. The registered provider has a registered school age service at the premises, which is currently not in operation.

Staffing

The service is operated by the registered provider who is also the person in charge and works in an administrative capacity providing support to the rooms when required. There are 10 adults employed by the service, including seven adults who work directly with the children in the service, the area operations manager, the area supervisor, and the registered provider. When the inspectors arrived at the service there were seven adults working directly with the children and two students on work placement providing support in a supernumerary capacity in one of the care rooms. The registered provider, area operations manager and area supervisor arrived at the service following the commencement of the inspection.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4)-Management and Recruitment
Regulation 11(1)(2)-Staffing Levels
Regulation 19(1)(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of Child
Regulation 23-Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Child
Regulation 25- First Aid
Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures
Regulation 28- Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 19 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Room and Montessori Room.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider/person in charge, area operations manager, area supervisor, staff, student 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.

Compliance Information

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

(2)(a) The files of all twelve adults were reviewed including the file of two students.

(2)(a)(b) Twenty-two written and validated references were available in relation to the twelve adults.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures had been obtained for all twelve adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of three adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that nine adults who work 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The designated person in charge or a named person to deputise were not present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

(c) Inspectors discussions with staff and a review of documentation demonstrated that there was no clearly defined management structure in the service should the named persons in charge be unavailable.

(2)(a)(b) A written reference was available which was not validated for 1 adult and a second written and validated reference was not available for the same staff member.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to two adults being allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to show that one adult who was working directly with the children 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.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

(1)(b) Staff have been given a clear detailed document of the management structure displayed in all areas like reception and care rooms for staff to see who the named person in charge is if the named persons in charge are not available.

(c) Staff given in writing a clear guide of the management structure to keep in their rooms for clarification and is also displayed in reception for staff to see ensuring there will be no issue of who is in charge.

(2)(a)(b) Management validated the reference that was not validated prior on day of inspection. The registered provider will ensure that all written references will be validated correctly by a member of management.

(3) All written references will be from reputable sources before any member of staff works with the children. The registered provider has stated that they will ensure each employee or unpaid works is suitable and competent for taking into the consideration the needs of the children.

(4) The registered provider will ensure that no person without a major award level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the national qualifications framework will have access or be eligible to work with the children. The person in question on the day of inspection has all the modules completed and has one assignment to be corrected and then will receive full level 6 award. There are enough staff in room to facilitate the children, the staff member will continue to work in the service doing office work until the full award is received.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b) List including name of person in charge if the named persons in charge are unavailable.

(1)(c) List of management structure given to all staff and displayed throughout the service.

(2)(a)(b) A copy of the written validated reference received.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children. There were 10 adults available to the 39 children in the morning and 10 adults available to the 38 children in the afternoon.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as follows:

During the morning:

- Baby Room – there was 2 adults working directly with 6 children aged 12 months to 1 year 8 months years old.
- Pre-Montessori Room– there were 2 adults working directly with 15 children aged 1 ½ to 2 ½ years old.
- Montessori Room – There were 3 adults working directly with 18 children aged 2 ½ to 4 ½ years old.

During the afternoon:

- Baby Room – there was 2 adults working directly with 6 children aged 12 months to 1 year 8 months years old.
- Pre-Montessori Room– there were 2 adults working directly with 15 children aged 1 ½ to 2 ½ years old.
- Montessori Room – There were 3 adults working directly with 17 children aged 2 ½ to 4 ½ years old.

The person in charge, area operations manager and area supervisor were present in a supportive role on the day of 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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- Staff were observed interacting with children using soft tones and a supportive manner. At nappy changing time a staff member was observed to offer comfort and spoke in a gentle manner when explaining to a child why they needed their nappy changed. This modelled positive interactions.
- At the morning snack time children in the Montessori room were observed to be offered blueberries and apples chopped up and children in the Baby room were observed to offered banana, raisins and crackers.

- There was a water station in the Montessori room ensuring water was available to the children in the care room throughout the day. Water bottles were individually labelled for each child. The children were observed drinking water with their meals.
- In the Montessori room children were encouraged to put on their own coats and staff were observed to be patient and supportive of the children who took more time for this task.
- Identity and belonging were promoted throughout the service. For example, there were birthday walls and the children's artwork was on display in the care rooms and corridors. Children in the Pre-Montessori and Montessori room had their own personalised coat hooks labelled with their name and a photograph accessible at their level.
- Children were observed to access the outdoor play area. This supports their social, cognitive, gross, and fine motor development.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The care rooms in the service were designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration. Children were observed to take part in free play and group work. The layout of the rooms facilitated these choices as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children. There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in each care room. Cosy areas of soft floor mats or rugs with soft chairs, cushions and books for rest and relaxation were present in the baby room. There was a small couch for children to sit and relax in the Montessori room, this was observed to be used by children during the inspection.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development, stored in photographic labelled boxes and on low shelves. In the baby room there was sensory equipment, sorting toys, cars, pull along toys and musical instruments. In the Montessori room there were arts and crafts materials directly accessible to the children; there was a home area with a play kitchen with supporting equipment and play food, range of construction toys to include jigsaws and wooden puzzles, wooden building blocks, plastic building bricks, stickle bricks, magnetics; sorting and stacking toys; toys for transporting such as cars trucks, animals and dinosaurs; for imaginary play dress up clothes, instruments, dolls clothes, dolls highchair and buggy. Montessori materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were also present in the Montessori room.

Supporting Relationships:

- In the hallway there was an interest board where the service shared the children's interests with the parents/guardians. Staff discussed how information is shared with parents/guardians via telephone calls, emails, meetings, and informal chats at the door.
- During snack time the adults engaged in social conversation with the children, promoting a relaxed atmosphere.
- Language and literacy were supported in the care rooms through discussion, songs, and stories. For example, at circle time in the Montessori room children discussed the weather and read a story book brought into the service by a child.
- Children's individual routines were displayed on the wall in the baby room. Staff discussed how one child had been accommodated to be put to sleep earlier due to appearing to be tired and in need of rest.
- Transition between 'clean up time' and 'snack time' was recognised and supported through songs.
- There was a visual photographic daily routine on display in the Montessori room. Routines offer a dependable structure that allows children to know what to expect, creating a sense of stability and security.

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 door to the service was secure. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the service unknown to staff and prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents within care rooms were observed to safely stored out of reach of children.
- Snacks and milk supplied by parents/guardians were observed to be stored in the fridge.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- The inspectors observed that blind cords were secure and inaccessible to the children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Communal areas were clear and uncluttered.

Infection Control:

- Windows in the care room were open to allow for circulation and reduce cross infection.
- Staff were observed to wear aprons and gloves for nappy changing procedures.

Fire Safety:

- All emergency exits were observed to be clear from obstruction. This supports the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The following was observed which posed a risk of injury to children:

1. The glass doors in the Pre-Montessori room and Montessori room were not observed to have visibility strips.
2. Medication was not stored safely and out of reach of children. Two of the children's prescribed medication were observed to be stored in the individual child's bag on low hooks level outside the door of the care room, one of the bags was observed to be open.
3. Garda vetting was available for twelve adults. However, one of these vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. It is acknowledged that a renewal of Garda Vetting disclosure was applied for on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

There was a risk of cross infection. Evidenced by the following:

4. The armchair in the baby room was not in a good state of repair. The armchair material was visibly worn and cracked and not be effectively cleaned.
5. Bed linen was stored on eight individual beds which were stacked one on top of the other at 11.10am.
6. The temperature of the water in the taps of the three wash hand basins in the sanitary and nappy changing area off the Pre-Montessori and Montessori was cold. This is not conducive to encouraging children to wash their hands effectively.
7. Children in the baby room did not to have their hands washed after nappy changing and outdoor play time. The staff were observed to use baby wipes to wipe the children's hands. Children should be facilitated to wash their hands under warm running water, with liquid soap and paper hand towels provided in line with HSPC guidance in relation to infection control protection measures.

Administration of Medication:

The service did not ensure correct storage and administration of medication as evidenced by the following:

8. Medication was not stored in line with the service's record of medicines administration document. Two prescribed medications were observed not labelled or in their original packaging. Medicine needs to be stored in its original packaging, clearly labelled providing details of child's name and details of the dosage to be administered. One of the prescribed medications reviewed had an expiry date of 09/2023.
9. One child who staff discussed has prescribed medication and written permission from the parents to administer the medication if required did not have the prescribed medication available on the day of inspection.
10. A clearly written medical care plan to enable staff to identify and accurately administer treatment when required was not available for three children present with prescribed medication.

The absence an individual medical care plan for the three children posed a risk of staff not being aware of symptoms to look out for and the correct procedure to follow in the event where one of these children required the medication to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

11. The service did not follow safe sleep practices, evidenced by the following:
 - At 12.59pm in the sleep room off the baby room there were six children facilitated to sleep on low beds and one child facilitated to sleep in a cot. An adult was not present at all times to supervise the children on low beds but came into the room intermediately to carry out sleep checks. During a time, the children were not supervised, the inspector observed one child to be awake at 13.17pm. The last sleep check by a staff member was at 13.07pm. Children on low beds during sleep time must not be alone in the care room.
 - Sleep records which included the children's colour, breathing and position were not carried out every 10 minutes as per safe sleep guidelines. A staff member who was observed to check the children at 12.50pm was observed to return 17 minutes later at 13.07pm. The staff member incorrectly recorded this sleep check in the sleep record as haven taken place at 13.00pm opposed to the actual time at 13.07pm.

Fire Safety:

12. Staff and children attendance was not accurately logged, evidenced as follows:
 - At 12.50pm six adults of the twelve adults present had signed in the staff attendance record book.
 - In the pre-Montessori room, there were 15 children observed to be present at 9.49am. On review of the attendance book at 10.00am there were only ten children marked present.

At 9.50am in the Montessori room there were eighteen children observed to be present. On review of the attendance book at 10.02am there was only ten children marked present. In addition, a child in the Montessori room who was observed to go home at 11.45am was still marked as present in the attendance book at 12.48pm. The maintenance of accurate attendance records is essential to account for and ensure the safe evacuation of children in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Actions

General Safety:

1. The glass in the pre-Montessori room has now got stickers for visibility and for the safety of the children. Management will ensure all rooms have visibility stickers or strips on the glass doors at all times.
2. All medication is now stored in a safe and secure place out of reach of the children. Management will ensure all medication will be labelled in the correct packaging with the child's name and stored safely.
3. Garda Vetting was applied for the person without it on the day of inspection. All staff members will have up to date garda vetting in place

Infection Control:

4. The armchair in the Baby room was removed and replaced on the day of inspection. The registered provider has stated that all chairs will be maintained well and will be replace if damaged or worn.
5. Bed linen was removed from beds and stored in the children's individual baskets which are named and labelled. Staff have been made aware that bed linen must not remain on beds and stacked on top of each other due to infection control.
6. The thermostat was checked by maintenance and was turned down to the correct water temperature to ensure the correct temperature of the water. The thermostat will be checked regularly to ensure it is at the correct temperature.
7. Staff have been advised that children must wash their hands using warm running water, liquid soap and hand paper towels after returning from the garden or nappy changing. No baby wipes will be used.

Administration of Medication:

8. All children's medication is now labelled with the child's information and details of dosage on the packaging. Medication will be stored in line with the services administration of medication policy and will be checked for original packaging, labelling and expiry dates.

9. Any child with prescribed medication will always have their medication in the service for when it is needed. All children with prescribed medication must have it available in the service with written permission from the parents.
10. A clear medical care plan has been given to all children on prescribed medication from their GP with written permission from parents allowing staff to administer the medication when needed.

Safe Sleep:

11. A staff member will remain in the sleep room to observe children while they sleep on low beds. No child will be allowed to sleep on low beds unless supervised by a member of staff. Staff members are to continuously check the sleeping children every ten minutes and the sleep records are to be filled out correctly as the time of checking sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

12. All children are to be marked into the attendance book at the time they enter the room in the service. Any child that is collected early will be marked out correctly at the time that they are leaving the care room. Staff have been made aware that maintaining accurate records is essential for the safety of children in the event of an emergency when children need to be evacuated.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of visibility strips on glass doors.
2. No evidence submitted.
3. Up to date Garda Vetting Disclosure for staff member.

Infection Control:

No evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

Photographic evidence of an individual medical care plan.

Safe Sleep:

No evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider through the corrective and preventive action plan have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection.

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

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On review of the staff files, it was observed that there was no staff member with First Aid Responder (FAR) training available to the children. It is acknowledged that two staff members employed in the service are trained in paediatric first aid. However, there was no person employed with in date FAR training to meet the regulatory requirements.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) Eight members of staff are booked on FAR training which will take place on 4th 11th and 18th May 2024. All remaining members of staff have now completed Paediatric First Aid training.

Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that a number of staff who are on the premises must have FAR training in date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Letter from the FAR training company confirming onsite FAR training booking.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 25(1) will remain outstanding until the FAR training course is completed and certification is obtained. One staff member with certification in first aid response (FAR) must be on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 20 February 2024.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in July 2023 and the smoke detection system in December 2023.
- (2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were provided.
- (4) The procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in prominent positions in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the number of children the service can accommodate at one time and an expiry date 27 March 2024.