

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL015		
Name of Service:	Avon Lodge Creche & Montessori		
Address of Service:	Church Ave, Blanchardstown Village, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D15 V0HE		
Name of Registered Provider:	Bernadette Hill		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date(s) of Inspection:	17/01/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM 13
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		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable.

Description of service

The service is located in Blanchardstown village and provides full day care and sessional childcare education and care to children aged from 0 to 6 years old. The service participated in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service can cater for a maximum of 20 children attending a full day care service. There are three care rooms, a kitchen and a designated cot room. A secure outdoor play area was located off the car park near the entrance doors.

Staffing

On the day of inspection, the registered provider and the person in charge facilitated the inspection process. There were four childcare staff and one student working directly with the children in the care rooms. The registered provider employs one staff member to work in the kitchen. The registered provider works in the service and is available to provide support when needed.

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)(4)-Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(2)(8)-Staffing Levels.

Regulation 19(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of child.

Regulation 23-Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child.

Regulation 24(1)- Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25- First Aid

Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28- Insurance

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8(1)- Notification of Change in Circumstances. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under: Regulation 19, Regulation 23, Regulation 24 and Regulation 26. The scope of the inspection included the Baby Room and the 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the 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.

Non-Compliance Information

The service did not submit a change of circumstance application to notify the inspectorate of the change in person in charge.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstance application on the 23 January 2024 to notify the inspectorate of the change of person in charge.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated they will give 60 days notice to the agency in writing of any proposed change before the proposed change will take effect.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 8 Notification of Change in Circumstances.

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.

(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 a named person to deputise as needed.

(b) The registered provider and the designated person in charge were present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service throughout the session.

(c) There was a clearly defined management structure in the service. Staff identified the person in charge and deputy person in charge to the inspector.

(2) The files of seven adults were reviewed; one student, one auxiliary staff and five adults which work directly with the children. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a)(b) Fourteen written and validated references were available in relation to seven adults.

(c) All seven adults had up to date Garda Vetting Disclosures.

(d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that five adults 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 and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) At 10.20am a staff member who does not hold 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 and Youth Affairs was observed to be providing direct care to a preschool child in the sleep room located off the baby room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The registered provider has stated that the staff member in question had only been in with the service for one week. Management had explained to the staff member that she could not provide direct care for the children as she did not have a qualification of QQI level 5 Early Childhood Care and Education. The other qualified staff member made an error in calling the unqualified staff member as management were dealing with the inspector and the staff member did not want to interrupt them. This will never happen again as it was a new auxiliary staff member, and it has now been explained to the new staff member.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that staff who do not have a qualification of QQI level 5 in Early Years Childhood Care and Education cannot provide direct care to any children in the care of the service.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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.

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

During the morning:

The Baby Room – Two staff members caring for four babies aged between 6 months to 15 months.

Pre-Montessori Room – One staff member caring for five children aged between 15 months to 2 ½ years old.

The Montessori Room -One staff member and one student caring for eight children aged between 2 ½ years to 5 years.

During the afternoon:

The Baby Room – Two staff members caring for four babies aged between 6 months to 15 months.

Pre-Montessori Room – One staff member caring for two children aged between 15 months to 2 ½ years old.

The Montessori Room -Two staff members were caring for seven children aged between 2 ½ years to 5 years and 2 school aged children.

(8)(a) Two staff members were present at all times in the service as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

(9) A student who was present on the day of the inspection was not included in the adult: child ratios of the room but was present in the Montessori room.

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. In the baby room the staff member was observed to offer comfort and spoke in a gentle manner to a child who appeared upset. This modelled positive interactions.
- At morning snack time children were observed to be offered toast and a selection of fruit (apples, orange, bananas, and grapes) sliced up into small pieces. Staff discussed how children bring a dinner from home which is heated up in the service. The service also provided a hot meal option for children. Children were observed to eat fish fingers, waffles and spaghetti hoops.
- Water was available to the children in the care room throughout the day. Children had their own water bottles. The children were observed drinking water with their meals.
- In the Montessori room independence was supported throughout the day. Children were observed to be given jobs to help, one child put out placemats before mealtime and children were observed to partake in clean up jobs afterwards. For example, one child had a water bottle spray and sprayed down the table, another child had a child sized sweeping pan and brush and swept the floor.
- 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 in the Montessori room. For example, children had their own personalised placemat with their picture and favourite cartoon character. In the baby room, there was a 'My Day' wall which had pictures of the babies engaging in free play, sensory activities, arts, and crafts and snack time.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff discussed how information is shared with parents/guardians via the information board inside the door, email, newsletters, and informal chats at the door. Staff in the baby room discussed how they share information by sending home a daily record book which includes details about the child's form on the day, sleep, eating, toileting and activities that the child engaged in. The registered provider showed the inspector children's individual books that the service sends home to families to share pictures of activities throughout the year.
- Staff were able to discuss how settling in was made as smooth as possible within the service. Staff talked about how they support children to integrate and settle into the service by offering a settling in period with reduced hours for the first week to ensure a smooth transition from the home to the service.

Physical and Material environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. For example, in the baby room materials and equipment included a mirror on the wall, a ball pit, an art area, building blocks, connecting equipment, pull along toys and cause and effect toys, for example, musical battery-operated toys. Cause and effect toys help promote joint attention, play skills and exploration.
- Toys and equipment in the Montessori room were organised into defined areas of interest in the care room with a variety of supporting Montessori equipment available in each area. This variety of equipment allowed the children to engage in a range of learning experiences. For example, practical life, language, sensorial and mathematics experience.
- In the baby room there was an adult armchair to support the comforting of children, and this was observed in use during the inspection.
- Staff managed and supported transitions in the service, for example, staff in the Montessori room were observed to provide advance notice to the children when activities were coming to an end. Staff assisted children to tidy up in preparation for the next activity.
- Children's language development was supported through small group discussions, songs, and storytelling, which were observed during the inspection. The children in the Montessori room were observed to be learning about numbers and tracing during circle time.

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 doors to the service were secure. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the service unknown to staff and prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be safely stored out of reach of children.
- Foods supplied by parents/guardians were observed to be stored in the fridge.
- The access gate in the outdoor play area was observed to be secure.

Infection Control:

- Soothers were observed to be hygienically stored.
- Children had individual labelled cups and bottles for drinking water and milk.
- Children had individual labelled boxes to store nappies and lotions.
- Children had their own bed linen which was individually stored.
- Windows were opened throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate in the care rooms.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were used for the disposal of rubbish in the care rooms and sanitary accommodation.
- There was warm water, hand soap and paper hand towels to support hygienic hand washing.

Safe Sleep:

- Cots used for sleeping children were observed to be in good condition free from hazards.
- Staff were aware of safe sleep procedures. A staff member in the baby room explained how they ensure a safe sleeping environment, removing additional clothing before sleep and the use of cellular blankets.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in the baby cot room for children under 1 year old.
- Lighting was subdued in both the cot room and the care room where children slept.
- Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes by staff members during sleep time of children. Staff recorded each child's position, skin colour and breathing pattern.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

1. Out of the seven administration of medication forms reviewed. One form did not have the parents signature giving permission for the service to administer the prescribed medication and the form was not signed on collection to confirm that the guardian was made aware of the time of administration. This is not in line with the service policy which states that medication will not be administered without written consent.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Administration of Medication:

Corrective Action

The registered provider has stated that all medicine administration forms must be fully completed with the parent signature giving permission for the child to be given prescribed medication. In addition, medication forms must be signed by the parent on collection of their child to confirm that they are made aware of the time of administration of medicine.

Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated the above actions will be taken in line with the service policy which states that medication will not be administered without written consent.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

- No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the service have addressed the non-compliance identified. The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that each preschool child attending the service was checked in and out. The record of attendance for each room accurately reflected the children in the room and the times they entered and left the service. This was observed throughout the day of 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

(1) There was evidence to show that two staff had completed First Aid Responder Training and were available to the children attending the service during the operational hours of the service.

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 11 January 2024.
- (b) A maintenance certificate for the fire fighting equipment dated July 2023 was available for inspection. The maintenance certificate for the smoke detection system was not available for the inspector to review on the day of inspection but 2 certificates were submitted following the inspection to demonstrate that the smoke detection system was serviced in July 23 and January 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway in the service and the care rooms.

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 insured. The insurance certificate provided cover for 25 children from 01 March 2023 to 27 March 2024.