

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL117
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Blanchardstown Home - Start
<b>Address of Service:</b>	10 Blakestown Cottages, Blakestown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 HE29
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Murray
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	18/09/2023
<b>Date 2 of Inspection:</b>	26/09/2023
<b>No of pre-school children: Day 1</b>	AM 19
<b>No of pre-school children: Day 2</b>	AM 21
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Nelson and C. Harte. Day 1. T. Nelson. Day 2
<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).

## Conditions if applicable

Not applicable.

## Description of service

Blanchardstown Home Start is a part-time day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 38 children aged 0 to 6 years Monday to Friday. The service operates two sessions, a part-time session from 9.00am to 1.00pm, and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme sessional service from 1.30 to 4.30pm. Blanchardstown Home Start operates from two buildings within the premises, the Creche and the Treehouse. The creche is a converted residential building with rooms to include the Cubs and Bears room (0 to 2 and a half years old), sanitary facilities for children and staff, a cot room, a family room, a play therapy room and office. The Tree House is a building to the rear of the premises which has two care rooms, to include the Rainforest Room (2 and a half to 3 and a half years old) and the Sunshine room (2 years and 8 months to 5 years old). Further sanitary facilities are available in this building. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises.

## Staffing

There are currently 17 staff employed by the service including the registered provider, ten childcare staff who work directly with the children, and a family liaison co-ordinator who is the deputy person in charge. There are five adults who are employed under the Community Employment (CE) programme, of these four are supernumerary and undergoing a training programme to complete a level 5 qualification, one is kitchen staff, and one is undergoing training to complete a level 6 qualification. The registered provider is supernumerary and manages the oversight of the service.

Present on Day 1 of the inspection was the deputy person in charge, six childcare staff and four adults who are employed under the Community Employment (CE) programme. There were 13 adults present on Day 2, including the registered provider, the deputy person in charge, seven childcare staff and five CE staff members.

## 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), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2), Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid

However, on inspection on Day 1, non-compliances were identified under Regulation 15 and Regulation 16. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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

- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Cubs and Bears room and the Sunshine room and did not include the Rainforest Room. 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.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

#### 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.

The files of 17 adults were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks to ensure the staff members were suitable and competent:

- (2)
- (a) Seventeen validated written references were available from recent past employers.
  - (b) Seventeen validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 17 adults.
  - (d) Ten adults who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (4) Nine 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

### 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 were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were six adults available to work with the 19 children who were present on the morning of the inspection on Day 1 and six adults available to 21 children on Day 2.
- (2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times. The adult child ratios during the morning session were maintained as follows on Day 1;
- Cub and Bears room – 2 adults to 7 children aged between 10 months to 2 years 6 months old.
  - Sunshine room – 1 adult to 5 children aged between 2 to 4 years old.

- Rainforest room – 3 adults to 7 children aged between 2 years and eight months to 5 years old.

The adult child ratios during the morning session were maintained as follows on Day 2;

- Cub and Bears room – 2 adults to 6 children aged between 10 months and 2 years 6 months old.
- Sunshine room - 1 adult to 5 children aged between 2 to 4 years old.
- Rainforest room - 2 adults to 10 children aged between 2 years and eight months to 5 years old.

### 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:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) The following information was available for review:

- (h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained.
- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(3) Information in relation to the details of staff and records in relation to references and Garda and police vetting was not available for review on Day 1 of the inspection.

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

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

Corrective action: Staff records will be available on request of Tusla inspection.

Preventive action: Person in charge has access to staff files when requested from Tusla inspector.

##### **Supporting documentation submitted**

None submitted as this information was reviewed on the second day of inspection.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16(3) has been 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:

- Practices such as mealtimes, nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely and pleasant experiences for the children. Documentary evidence showed meals provided were regular and varied, with a four-week menu plan available. Mealtime was observed to be a pleasant experience where children were given the time to have their meal at their own pace.
- 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 and other strategies were observed. This was in line with the behaviour management policy which was displayed in the rooms. 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, 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 predictability and comfort for young children.
- Engagement with families and parents was facilitated via an online software application, flyers and meetings. Parents spend an extended period of time in the rooms to support the phased transition into the service for new children. This can promote a sense of welcome and identity for young children.

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

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The furniture and equipment in the indoor play areas were observed to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development, to include: arts and crafts materials, home areas with associated props; range of jigsaws; range of construction toys; sorting and stacking toys; range of toys for transporting such as cars and trains with tracks, small world play toys. This equipment provided for a range of play experiences for the children.
- The toys and equipment were laid out and grouped in defined interest areas, on low level shelving, visible to the children. This provided for independent decision making and facilitated engaging play experiences.
- There was a wide range of additional resources stored in the rooms to provide varied and alternative activities when required.

#### Non-Compliance Information

The following equipment and furniture in the outdoor play area was not maintained and was unsuitable for the children:

1. The wooden musical frame was in a state of disrepair and the instruments were rusted making it unsuitable to use.
2. The two wooden bench sets were in a state of disrepair and posed a pinch risk to the children.
3. The padding on the basket swing was damaged and torn and posed a risk of injury to the children.
4. The blue scooter was cracked and posed a risk of injury to the children.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective actions points 1 – 4: Wooden benches have been removed, as have all damaged bikes, scooters and tricycles. Musical stand, basket swing and trampoline have been removed also.

Preventive actions points 1 – 4: An application for funding and plans to refurbish the garden in the coming months has been developed. An Outdoor Safety Checklist to be completed daily.

## Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of outdoor play area.

Evidence of outdoor safety checklists.

Evidence of finding and planning for development of outdoor area.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 21 have been addressed and will be reviewed on the 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

The following measures were observed to be in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child of children:

### General Safety:

- The service had an electronic door release system which was managed and monitored by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children in the day of the inspection.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed.
- Low fencing was available in the Cubs and Bears room to cordon off an area to allow for babies to safely engage in floor play.
- Low-level windows had visibility stickers in place.
- Cables were observed to be secured and out of reach.

### Infection Control:

- Children were observed to be supported to handwash before meals and after outdoor play.
- The premises were in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.

### Safe Sleep:

- The cots and bed linen available were suitable for the children attending the service and were in line with recommended safe sleep guidelines.
- Although no children were observed to sleep on the day of the inspection, there was a log maintained for sleeping children where the colour, breathing and position of the children was checked at ten minute intervals.

### Fire Safety:

- Evidence of recent fire drills was displayed in the rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The water temperature in the wash hand basins in the Sunshine room exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. At 10.48am the inspector recorded a temperature of 46.8°C in the children's sink and 46.6°C in the adult's sink. This posed a scald risk to the children.
2. There was a trampoline in the outdoor area. This posed a risk of injury to the children. Trampolines are not appropriate for use in an early year's service.
3. A cleaning spray was observed to be accessible to the children at the sink area in the Sunshine room. This posed a risk of injury to the children. It is acknowledged this was later removed up high out of reach to the children.
4. The surface in the outdoor play area was uneven and posed a risk of injury to the children. For example:
  - At the entrance to the outdoor area by the gate, posing a trip risk.
  - The surface by the large wooden bench to the right of the garden had large gaps posing a trip risk.
  - The wooden step by the mud kitchen was broken and splintered, posing a risk of injury.
5. Stagnant water with mould was gathered in an uncovered storage container under the outdoor play sink which was accessible to children. This posed a risk to children should they ingest this.

#### Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

6. The swing-top lid waste disposal system in the Treehouse sanitary accommodation required repeated hand contact with the disposal unit. This does not support effective infection control.
7. There was no liquid soap available by the nappy changing unit in the Treehouse sanitary accommodation.
8. A sweeping brush and mop were stored in the sanitary accommodation in the Treehouse. Only items for use in the sanitary accommodation area should be stored there.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Corrective action: A company has been engaged to attend to the boiler thermostat.  
Preventative action: a daily checklist was developed to ensure the water is at the correct temperature.
2. Corrective action: The trampoline has been removed.
3. Corrective action: Cleaning products are to be kept out of reach of children.
4. Corrective action: Garden is to be refurbished as soon as possible.  
Preventative action: outdoor safety checklist was developed.
5. Corrective action: Water under the sink has been removed.  
Preventative action: This will be checked daily on outdoor safety checklist.

#### Infection Control:

6. Corrective action: The swing bins have been replaced with foot pedalled bins.
7. Corrective action: Soap available at all sinks until faulty dispensers have been replaced/removed.  
Preventative action: A soap dispenser check added to daily sanitary safety check.
8. Corrective action: Items removed and kept in the proper location.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Evidence of daily checklist.
2. Photographic evidence.
3. Photographic evidence.
4. Photographic evidence, copy of outdoor safety checklist.
5. Copy of outdoor safety checklist.

#### Infection Control:

6. Photographic evidence.
7. Photographic evidence.
8. No evidence submitted.

## Summary Comment

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

## 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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(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.