

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL314
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Name of Service:	The Village Creche
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Address of Service:	St Anne's Square, Portmarnock, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D13 C625
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Rooney, Kelly O'Reilly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	06/03/2024
	07/03/2024

No of pre-school children:	Day 1	AM	39	PM	24
	Day 2	AM	34	PM	

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Taaffe
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
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Description of service

The Village Creche is an early years service located in Portmarnock, Co Dublin which is registered to accommodate a maximum of 64 pre-school children from 0 to 6 years of age on a sessional, part-time and full day care basis, in addition to school age children up to 12 years of age. The service currently caters for children from their first birthday and operates from 7.45am to 5.15pm each weekday. Eligible pre-school children are facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am – 12.00midday during term-time for 38 weeks each year. The service is conducted from a 2-storey converted residential property with 6 care rooms provided on the premises. The Baby Room, Tweenie Room and Montessori Room 2 are located on the ground floor, with the Pre-Montessori Room, Montessori Room 1 and the School Age Room located on the first floor. There are two enclosed outdoor play areas provided in the service, one located to the front of the premises and the second area located to the rear. A separate sleep room is provided on the ground floor, adjoining the Baby Room.

Staffing

In addition to managing the operation of the service, the two registered providers work directly with the children in attendance on a daily basis and prepare the food provided, with support from a team of 7 staff members employed, all of whom care for the pre-school children.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23 and 25. However, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk was identified under Regulations 24 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 providers, staff and children who were present on the days 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

(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 registered providers were the designated persons in charge of the service, with one or both present on the premises a daily basis when the service is in operation.

(b) One of the two registered providers was present when the inspector arrived unannounced at 9.15am on the first day of inspection. The second registered provider arrived on the premises shortly afterwards and both were present in the service for the remainder of the inspection.

A total of 9 staff files maintained for 9 adults were reviewed, namely the two registered providers and the 7 staff members employed in the service.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 9 adults whose files were reviewed.

(a) Twelve written references were from past employers.

(b) Six written references were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 9 adults who work in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 1 adult who had lived outside the State as an adult for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) The two registered providers and all 7 staff members work directly with the pre-school children in the service, each of whom held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed when the highest numbers of children were present during the inspection:

- In the Baby Room there were 4 children aged 1 year 2 months to 1 year 6 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Tweenie Room there were 3 children aged 2 years to 2 years 2 months being cared for by 1 staff member. At times during the inspection 2 staff members cared for the maximum combined number of 7 children attending the Baby Room and the Tweenie Room as a group in the Tweenie Room to facilitate play opportunities and support interactions.
- In Montessori Room 2 there were 11 children aged 3 years 4 months to 4 years 8 months being cared for by 2 staff members, one of whom was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to support a child with additional needs as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In the Pre-Montessori Room, there were 6 children aged 2 years 8 months to 3 years being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In Montessori Room 1 there were 15 children aged 2 years 11 months to 5 years 1 month being care for by 2 staff members.
- School aged children were cared for in the School Age Room on both days of inspection.

The registered providers were available to provide relief and support to the care rooms including during mealtimes, nappy changing and break times when required.

(8)(a) The registered providers ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, as evidenced in staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in the service.

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:

- The registered providers and staff members were observed to be warm and respectful and were appropriately responsive in their interactions and with meeting the needs of the children in their care.
- The children had access to their water bottles on low shelving which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty. The children were given sufficient time to relax and eat their snacks and meals in an unhurried manner. The adults sat with and chatted to the children at mealtimes which created a sociable atmosphere. Roast chicken, mixed vegetables and mashed potato was served for dinner on the first day of inspection with quiche served for tea. On the second day of inspection pasta Bolognese was served for dinner, and hummus, breadsticks, cucumber and carrot sticks were served for tea, all cooked and prepared on site. The older pre-school children brought their own snacks from home for the morning snack with diced fruit provided by the service at this time for the younger children.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner and positive interactions were observed taking place between the adults and children during these procedures. Prompting, supervision and assistance when using the toilet was provided as necessary to the children who were toilet trained.
- The children in the Baby Room and Tweenie Room were placed to sleep at 11.50am after dinner. Staff members stated that these children would be facilitated to sleep when they showed signs of tiredness outside of their normal routine, if required. Soft seating and floor mats were provided in each care room which facilitated the children to take a break from activities and rest if required during the day.
- All children played outdoors on both days of inspection and were observed being dressed appropriately in advance of moving outside into the breezy Spring sunshine. The older pre-school children ate dinner at the picnic benches provided in the larger outdoor play area under the supervision of adults on the first day of inspection, with lots of chat and laughter heard during this social activity.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The adults spoke positively and warmly to and about the children during the inspection and frequently initiated conversations with the children, responded meaningfully to their verbal and non-verbal using gentle tones of voice.
- The children seemed to be very familiar with all the adults, frequently using their names to confidently ask questions and to request them to join in or assist them with play if required.
- The children were encouraged to value and respect each other. The adults praised the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you.

- A written record of the pre-school children's meals, activities, general wellbeing and, if relevant, nappy changes and sleep was maintained in each care room and this information was shared with the parents on a daily basis.

Physical and material environment:

- The children were provided with appropriate-sized low-level chairs and tables for meals and snack time or to play at when engaging in tabletop activities. Tables were waist high and chairs designed for toddlers with sides and splayed legs to support a young child to sit stably were provided in the Tweenie Room, in addition to high chairs for the younger children in the Baby Room and the Tweenie Room who could not yet sit unsupported.
- Developmentally appropriate play materials and equipment were visible and easily accessible to the children, stored on open shelving at their height in each of the care rooms, which facilitated choice and supported child-led play experiences.
- Play equipment and materials were grouped to provide specific interest areas for the children, with home corners, shop areas, construction areas, library areas and a doctor's surgery amongst the defined areas noted in the care rooms.
- A variety of sensorial play experiences were facilitated in all care rooms. For example, an adequate selection of textured items was provided and accessible to the children in the Baby Room and the Tweenie Room to support exploration through touch. These included a range of wooden play materials and textured balls, brushes, sponges and pieces of fabric. Playdough and tray top activity tables containing coloured rice, dried pasta, shredded paper, cones and conkers were provided in the Pre-Montessori Room, Montessori Room 1, Montessori Room 2 and the School Age Room.
- Art and crafts supplies including paint, brushes, pencils, crayons, paper and craft glue were provided in the care rooms. Wall space was used to display samples of the children's curricular-themed art work, including Spring and St. Patrick's Day pictures and craft work.
- Books were available in each care room to support the children's language development.
- Two separate enclosed outdoor areas were provided in the service, one located to the rear of the service which is designated for use by the younger children and one located to the front of the service which is used by the older pre-school children and the school aged children. The smaller area used by the younger children was surfaced with artificial grass and was directly accessible from the Tweenie Room and the adjoining corridor.

A rigid plastic curved tunnel, sit on rocking toys, push along toys, a wooden kitchen, a plastic playhouse, a low-level slide and a wheelbarrow were amongst the play materials provided in this area. The larger area to the front of the service which was accessed from the main hallway and from Montessori Room 2 was mainly surfaced with artificial grass, with paving in place along the side of the building and a number of digging patches provided. A wooden climbing frame with standing platform and an attached slide, a plastic playhouse, ride on toys, a low level plastic slide, a wooden kitchen, push along cars and children's picnic benches were included in the play equipment provided in this space.

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 warm water temperature in the sanitary accommodation and care rooms did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C which reduced the risk of scalding for the children.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Safety gates were in place at the top and bottom of the stairs.
- Windows and window blinds were appropriately secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely on high shelving out of reach of children.
- The kitchen, when unoccupied, was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.

Infection Control:

- Suitable disposable gloves and aprons were available and observed being used appropriately for nappy changing. Staff members washed their own hands and supported the children to wash their hands after each nappy change. Additionally, the children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after outdoor and messy play.
- Liquid soap and single use paper towels were available for hand hygiene at all wash hand basins in the service.

- Soothers were individually labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use. A portable microwave steriliser was available in the service. In discussion with the inspector, staff members clearly communicated appropriate and hygienic management of mouthed toys and soothers on a daily basis.
- The tables were wiped down prior to snack and mealtimes.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members described safe sleep practices. Sleep checks were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting the children's position, colour and breathing pattern.
- All children aged less than 2 years slept in a standard cot on the days of inspection. The registered providers were aware of the requirement to have a robust sleep plan and risk assessment in place should a child aged less than 2 years be facilitated to sleep in a bed rather than a cot.
- Cots in the sleep room and sleep mats which were set up in the Tweenie Room after dinner were positioned at the recommended distance of a minimum of 50cm apart which reduced the risk of cross infection and enabled staff to access children in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The bins provided for the disposal of nappies in the nappy changing room on the ground floor and in the sanitary accommodation on the first floor posed a risk of cross contamination as the pedal mechanism provided did not fully open the lids to allow for the hygienic disposal of nappies without touching the surfaces.
2. Children's snack food, some of which contained meat and dairy produce, were stored in the children's bags at room temperature on the day of inspection rather than in a fridge. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.

Administration of Medication:

3. A written record was not maintained in relation to the administration of temperature-reducing medication to a child who developed a high temperature in the service on the first day of inspection. The staff member contacted the parent by telephone in advance of administering the medication, but a documented record was not completed to show the name and dosage of the medication, the time when it was administered and to confirm that two staff member had checked the medication. Furthermore, the parent's signature was not obtained when they were collecting their child to document that they were fully aware of which and how much medication had been given to their child and the specific time it had been administered in the service, to allow appropriate time to elapse before a further dose was

administered at home. The registered providers confirmed that written records were never completed when temperature-reducing medication was administered to children in the service, and the service relied on telephone contact with the parents instead, taking account that parental consent for the administration of temperature reducing medication had been provided by this child's parent on enrolment in the service. It is acknowledged that the inspector reviewed appropriately completed records in relation to the administration of prescribed antibiotics to children in the service.

- Two auto-injector adrenaline pens provided for a named child in the service were out of date. This posed a risk that these products may not be sufficiently potent if required to be administered, in the event that the child developed anaphylaxis in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- A mattress provided in a cot in the sleep room was too small, leaving a gap of 6cm between the end of the mattress and the cot. This posed a risk that a child's limbs could become trapped in the gap and cause injury to the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

- New foot pedal operated nappy bins have been ordered.
- Parents have been notified that only non-perishable foods in snack boxes are allowed.

Administration of Medication:

- Manager has ordered a new medication administration book from a specialist early years supplier, specifically designed for temperature-reducing medication. Manager has spent time retraining staff, outlining that administration of temperature-reducing medication is similar to antibiotics. Staff are using the antibiotic book while waiting for the order.
- Two new in-date auto-injector adrenaline pens are now available in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- Mattress in the cot has been replaced with a proper-fitting mattress with no gaps.

Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Foot pedal operated bins are in place in all nappy change areas.
2. Staff will continue to check the snack boxes and send out reminders to parents on service's new policy of non-perishable foods. If anyone requires dairy or meats, it will be supplied from service's kitchen.

Administration of Medication:

3. Manager will check this new procedure is carried out properly in the medicine book.
4. Staff have now a check list form on the wall to remind them to check the date.

Safe Sleep:

5. Manager will check mattresses regularly in particular when they purchase new mattresses for new children.

Supporting documentation submitted:

A range of photographs showing evidence of the corrective actions undertaken by the registered providers in the service.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliances observed 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) One roll book was provided to record the attendance of children accommodated in both the Tweenie Room on the ground floor and the Pre-Montessori Room on the first floor. Staff members confirmed that it was not always documented when children left the service, as required. Instead, these records were completed retrospectively later on during the course of the evening or the next morning. This posed a risk of the children not being counted under the daily supervision routines or in the event of an evacuation emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(1) A separate attendance book is in place for the Tweenie Room. Each room now has its own attendance book.

Preventive Action

(1) Each room now has an attendance book. Manager has reviewed this procedure with all staff to ensure children are signed in and out every day when child arrives and leaves.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted in the form of a receipt for a new attendance record purchased from a specialist early years supplier.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliance observed under Regulation 24 has been adequately 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

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service which was stored in an accessible and conspicuous location out of the reach of children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) Only one staff member employed in the service held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training. On the first day of inspection none of the staff members present from 1.00pm to 5.15pm held FAR training. In order to allow for staff rostering and absences, more than one person must be appropriately qualified in order for staff to be readily available at all times to the children attending the full day care service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

- (1) A named staff member is booked to start FAR training next month.

Preventive Action

- (1) Both staff members with FAR training will work opposite shifts to ensure one person is present to carry out first aid if needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted showing that a named staff member has been booked to attend FAR training on 21/05/2024 and 22/05/2024.

Summary Comment

While assurances have been given this non-compliance remains outstanding. The registered providers are required to submit a copy of the FAR training certificate, when available, once issued to the staff member scheduled to attend the FAR training course on 21/05/2024 and 22/05/2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(b) The doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. A doorbell was in place to allow parents or visitors notify staff members of their arrival to the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The wall beneath the window in the Tweenie Room was not intact with a number of screw holes observed on an unpainted area. This surface could not be adequately cleaned.
 2. A metal threshold bar was insecurely held in place by peeling adhesive strips where two separate floor coverings met at the doorway between Montessori Room 1 and the adjoining sanitary accommodation. This posed a trip hazard and, in addition, the floor could not be adequately cleaned in this area.
- (e)
3. One of the children's toilets provided in the sanitary accommodation between Montessori Room 2 and the Tweenie Room was out of order on the days of inspection due to extensive leaking from the rear pipework when flushed.
 4. Two warm water taps were not working on the days of inspection as, when pressed, no water flowed from a tap in the larger sanitary accommodation on the first floor or from a separate tap in the sanitary accommodation between Montessori Room 2 and the Tweenie Room. This resulted in an insufficient supply of warm water to support effective hand hygiene procedures for the numbers of staff and children present.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

- (d)
1. The metal door strip between the doorway of toilet and classroom has now been replaced.
 2. Wall beneath window in Tweenie room is now fixed. Holes and dints are filled in, wall is smooth and repainted.
- (e)
3. Childrens toilet for Montessori Room 2 is now fixed.
 4. Two warm water taps on ground floor and first floor do not press down adequately for water to flow. Manager has fixed this short term but asked for a longer time frame as taps will need full replacement due to hard water.

Preventive Action

- (d)
1. Staff will regularly check need for maintenance on their fixtures and fittings.
 2. Staff will regularly check need for maintenance on their fixtures and fittings.
- (e)
3. Staff will regularly check need for maintenance on their fixtures and fittings.
 4. Manager aims to have new taps in place by June 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

A range of photographs showing evidence of the corrective actions undertaken by the registered providers in the service.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted has been reviewed and accepted. The non-compliances observed under Regulation 29(d) and (e) have been adequately addressed. These will be reviewed at the next inspection.