

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY032
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Blath Beag Creche
-------------------------	-------------------

Address of Service:	Blath Beag, Clochog, Oranmore, Co. Galway
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	H91 RH99
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Aoife O'Driscoll
-------------------------------------	------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
----------------------	---------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	18/12/2024
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	16
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency. 2 nd Floor St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo. F23HP58
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin & S O Brien
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

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

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

This pre-school is in a housing development, in the village of Oranmore, Co. Galway. This privately operated service offers full day care, from 7.30hrs to 18.00hrs. The service is registered for pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years of age. The service is operating three playrooms – namely the Baby room, Wobbler room, and Toddler room. The premises have its own kitchen, where children’s meals and snacks are prepared and stored on site. The meals are cooked by a service chef in a partner pre-school and delivered daily. There are two designated sleep rooms with three cots adjacent to the Baby sleep room and four cots adjacent to the Wobbler room. To the rear of the premises, there is a secure outdoor play area for children’s play, exploration, and fresh air.

Staffing

The registered provider attends the premises regularly and works between this service and a partner pre-school. There is a person in charge and deputy person in charge. There are eight staff including the registered provider working in the service. Eight staff hold at least a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. Additionally, there is one adult over 18 years of age on a childcare work placement.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1) (a) (b) (c) (2) (a) (b) (c) and (d) (3) (4) and (7). Regulation 10, 11, regulation 16 (h)(i) (k) (3), regulation 19 (a) 23, 25, 27 and 31. 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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by a notification of incident received to the inspectorate on the 13th of December 2024.

On the 20th December 2024, an Immediate Action was issued under Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment. This was in relation to a staff member working directly with children who did not have the required Garda vetting disclosure.

On the 20th December 2024 the registered provider advised that the staff member is no longer working directly with children and a new application to the vetting bureau has been submitted.

On the 2nd January 2025, the registered provider submitted the vetting disclosure in respect of the staff member was provided to the Inspectorate as required.

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.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-
- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
 - (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
 - (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
 - (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
 - (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
 - (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of nine adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Thirteen written and verified past employer references and five references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the nine adults employed in the service.

(c)

A garda vetting disclosure was available for eight adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for four of the adults that had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3) These procedures were completed prior to any adult having access to a preschool child.

(4) Eight adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

(7) (a) (b) (c)

The registered provider did ensure that all employees were provided with the appropriate information and training.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures are in place for the service:

- (b) Complaints policy
- (d) Infection control policy
- (j) Accident and incident policy
- (r) Risk management policy

Non-Compliance Information

The health and nutrition policy of the service detailed the three-week menu plan of the service however the policy did not contain the following required information:

- a) How infant formula is managed in the service.
- b) How food is safely stored, prepared and served
- c) How children are supervised while eating and drinking

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has updated their policy and procedure to reflect all new and up to date guidance on bottle making and how bottles are stored within the service.

Within the service the current practice is we carefully monitor the children while they are eating or drinking and this is done in a social way. We have ensured that all staff have received up to date training on the newest policy and correct bottle making procedures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the updated policy on healthy eating submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were seven adults working directly with children on the day of inspection. A student on placement was present in the toddler room under the supervision of staff members.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Baby Room: 1 adult cared for 2 children aged 1 year of age.
 - Toddler Room: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged between 1 and 3 years of age.
 - Wobbler room: 1 adult cared for 5 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
- Two additional staff members provided relief cover for breaks and nappy changes.

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;

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

(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)

(h) The registered provider demonstrated details of attendance by all preschool children in the service.

(l) The service had a daily rooster in place.

(k). The registered provider had records of accidents and incidents in the preschool service. These records demonstrated the immediate actions completed by the staff members and how the parent /guardian was informed of the incident.

(3)

The records were available for inspection on the day.

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

Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were supported during mealtimes with feeding when needed. Independence was encouraged with self help skills.
- Children sat at table and chairs or high chairs which were appropriate for their height and or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly when required and handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals. Older preschool children were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon. For children who do not require a sleep, appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children in the wobbler room were observed to be free to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up and learn to walk in a safe space.
- Children in the older care rooms had easy access to the outside area throughout the day and children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions.

Supporting relationships

- The staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. The inspector observed a child receiving comfort in the wobbler room when they woke from their nap. The staff member offered reassurance and communicated using soft gentle tones.
- In the toddler room staff supported children to engage positively with one another and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times and through a bespoke childcare application.
- The service had a designated childcare application with interactive communication with parents and guardians. There was section with photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities. Staff observations, a child's milestones and individual learning stories were captured. The childcare application showed details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child's likes, needs and preferences and general observations and comments.

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:

- An electronic operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.
- Visibility strips were installed on glass doors and windows for safety precautions and to prevent injury to children and staff.

- Internal doors were appropriately secured to ensure children from accessing unsafe areas and the outdoor areas unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after painting activities and before mealtimes.
- Warm water was available in all hand washing basins with temperatures ranging from 23.9°C to 35.9°C.
- Paper towel, soap and lidded bins were available at the hand basins and sanitary areas in the service.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition.

Safe Sleep:

- Adequate number of cots were available for the children who required cots for sleeping were available.
- The temperature recorded in the sleep room within the wobbler room was 20.2°C.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On the day of the incident children in the baby room had access to a bottle warmer filled with hot water which posed a safety risk. This piece of equipment caused a serious incident and it acknowledged the service notified the TUSLA Inspectorate of same.
2. A window in a care room was easily accessible to children by chairs that were stacked and could pose a risk to children climbing up and exiting or falling.

On 20/12/2024, photographic evidence was submitted to the inspectorate of a latch that had been installed on the window.

3. In the baby room there was an iPad and a charging cable within reach of the children within the room. This posed a safety risk to the children within the room.

The iPad and charging cable were removed from the care room during the inspection following feedback from the inspectors.

4. Powdered infant formula for one child in the baby room, was not prepared in accordance with the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) best practice guidance, which advises that powdered infant formula should be made up at home. Staff advised that they made up bottles on site, as per parents' preference.

Safe Sleep:

1. A child aged less than two years of age was sleeping on a stackable floor bed in the toddler room. As per the Guidance for the Early Learning and Care sector on sleep provision for children under 24 months

document stackable beds for children under 24 months are not permitted for children under 24 months as they are not sufficiently comfortable/conducive to sleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety

1. The bottle maker has been removed from the service.
2. A safety latch was put on the window the next day - picture provided to the inspector.
3. I pads only to be charged at night time in the office. There has been a high shelf put in the care room to place the Ipad out of the children's reach.
4. New bottle making procedures in place as discussed in the previous point.

A monthly service review will be completed by the Registered provider/Management team. Any new equipment that is being used within the service will be risk assessed to prevent any issues/risk.

Safe Sleep:

Children under the age of 2 are not permitted to sleep on a stackable bed. If a child for health and safety reason is unable to sleep in a cot the service will provide a safe sleep approved floor bed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence and proof of window repair submitted. Updated policy on healthy eating submitted.

Safe Sleep:

No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found 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

(1)

The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid is immediately available to the preschool children attending the service.

There are two adults employed in the service trained in FAR with an expiry date of May 2026 and September 2026.

(1) (a) (b)

There is a first aid box located in each of the care rooms

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

Children attending the service are being supervised by qualified staff members at all times. During indoor activities, supervision is primarily by sight. Staff members were observed to be seated alongside children offering support, prompting and encouraging children as they play. In the outdoors staff members were strategic in where they positioned themselves ensuring all children could be seen as they play. Mealtimes were supervised as staff members sat alongside children, offering support, assisting with opening yoghurts, cutting or mashing food as required. Sleep time was supervised by staff members remaining in the sleep room or care room supervising sleep and completing physical ten-minute checks. Children who were able to use the toilet were supported to do so independently. Staff remained within hearing range of the children and encouraged good hand washing hygiene. Children were given the full attention of staff members during nappy changing. The equipment needed for the nappy change was within easy reach and staff remained close supervising the child at all times.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

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

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

(d)

The registered provider did notify the agency within the required timeframe of an incident where there was serious injury to a preschool child while attending the service that required medical treatment in a hospital.