

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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|--|---|----|-------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>   | TU2015GY033   |    |       |
| <b>Name of Service:</b>  | Blath Beag Creche   |    |       |
| <b>Address of Service:</b>   | 21 Abhainn Na Ri, Oranbeg, Oranmore, Co. Galway.  |    |       |
| <b>Eircode:</b>  | H91 DW70  |    |       |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>  | Aoife O'Driscoll  |    |       |
| <b>Service type:</b>   | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional  |    |       |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>   | 16/05/2024  |    |       |
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b>  | AM  | 30 | PM 28 |
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>  | TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway. |    |       |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>   | H. Heagney  |    |       |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Early Years Inspector   |    |       |
| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>  |   |    |       |
| 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). |   |    |       |
| <b>Conditions if applicable</b>  | Not applicable  |    |       |

### Description of service

This private pre-school service offers the options of full day care and part time care provision from 7.30hrs to 18.00hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme, from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs, Monday to Friday is also provided. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years of age. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on Montessori and emerging interests is provided. The pre-school service is located on the ground floor. There are two playrooms namely the 'small room' and the 'big room'. Stackable beds are available for children requiring sleep provision. Quiet rest areas are available in each of the playrooms for children to rest and relax. Food is prepared, cooked, and stored on site in a designated kitchen by a resident chef. The pre-school children have access to a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the pre-school, and an all-weather outdoor classroom. There is also a sheltered area to the front of the pre-school, for children's play activities, fresh air, and exploration.

### Staffing

The registered provider works between this service, a partner pre-school, and a designated school aged service. There is a person in charge and deputy person in charge. There are a total of nine staff currently working in the premises. Eight staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. In addition, the service has a designated chef who prepares, cooks, and serves the service meals. There is an adult over the age of 18 years, on a childcare work placement who was supervised when interacting with the children. An additional contracted adult attends the service one day a week, to facilitate music, song, and dance activities.

### 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 and health, welfare, and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(b) On the day of the inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The service showed evidence that there was always a named person consistently in charge, on a day-to-day basis. The staff were aware of who was the deputy person in charge in the absence of the designated person.

(c) The service showed evidence of a clear management structure that identified the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker. The service had appropriate administrative processes, ensuring effective operation of the service.

The files of the nine staff and one adult over the age of 18 years of age on a childcare work placement were presented to the early year inspector.

(2)(a)&(b) Twenty of the twenty written validated references, on file for the nine staff and one adult on a childcare work placement were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the nine staff and the one adult on a childcare work placement. Garda vetting was also available for the adult attending the pre-school service for the music and dance programme.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Five of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age, and had the required police vetting. It is acknowledged that where applicable these vetting's were translated by a reputable source.

(4) Eight staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 6 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the eight staff.

### 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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that the adult child ratios were adhered to.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.
- On the morning of the inspection, there were 30 pre-school children aged between 3 to 5 years. There were five childcare staff directly caring for these children.
- There is one adult on a childcare work placement who was supervised when interacting with the children.
- There was a person in charge who assisted in the administration part of the inspection.
- An additional staff member commenced in the service at 11.00hrs
- In the afternoon, there were 28 pre-school children aged between 3 to 5 years. There were five staff caring for these children.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

*(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)&(i)

Nineteen children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspectors.

The nineteen records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The nineteen children's records contained the following:-

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

- Details were recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
  - The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
  - A record of any immunisations the child has had.
  - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.
- (4) &(5) The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack(s) and meal(s) without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children’s ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, and toileting.
- On the day of the inspection, two children in the small room required nappy changing and were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained.
- The older children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.

- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance for example balancing on beams, playing hopscotch.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.  
For example:
  - assigning a key person to each child;
  - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
  - being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
  - behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
  - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language;
  - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
  - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
  - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other, chalk play, playing house, making bird cakes with eyes, pasta and lentils and building shapes.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
- The staff supported children to understand how others were feeling, how to chat about their feelings, and how to comfort and help them.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.
- Children were supported to develop knowledge and skills to make choices regarding food, activities, and play experiences. Learning materials and experiences were available to reinforce choices.
- 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, a social media interactive communication application, a bespoke childcare application, and via profile scrapbooks.
- 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 attendance, sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child's likes, needs and preferences and general observations / comments.

- Staff collated for each child a profile scrapbook 'my learning journal', showing the child's journey, the themes engaged in and samples of the child's work. A sample of the themes today included 'all about me', witches, transport, cartoons, magic, strawberries, dinosaurs, squirrels, little ponies, I love Mom, and traffic lights.
- Staff worked with parents and guardians in relation to children's sleep patterns and needs. On the day of inspection, between 12.30hrs to 13.40hrs, a total of nine children were given the opportunity to sleep on stackable beds in the small room. The staff recognised children's individual cues of tiredness indicating their need for sleep and rest.
- Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- On the morning of inspection, an additional contracted adult attended the service, to facilitate music, song, and dance activities. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to free play, at story time, at circle time, at construction building, connecting, at sensory play, at pretend kitchen / house, and sorting stacking materials. The children painted, played games, puzzles, and insets. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles. They fed, and dressed baby dolls, played with small world furniture, little people, cuddly toys, and dolls. They enjoyed art and craft work including painting, playdough, and sensory play. The staff taught the children 1 to 10 in English, Spanish and Irish. The children sang songs and rhymes including big bad wolf who blew the house down, Happy and Rex the dinosaur. The children chatted to the inspector about going on an outing to a pet farm later in the month.
- All the children had the opportunity to play outside. Children enjoyed chalk play, hopscotch, riding bicycles, push cars, climbing up to the house, using the slide, at sand play, making cakes, and balancing on the beams.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. In all the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child’s activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff responded to the children in a timely and appropriate way when they were crying or when becoming upset.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. For example, the inspector noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used questions such as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told ‘no’. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious, and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- The main meals were provided by the service and prepared and cooked on site by the designated chef.
- Between 9.30hrs to 10.00hrs, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians of yogurts, crackers, cheeses, meat slices, fruit pieces and sandwiches.
- At 12.00hrs, the children had a hot lunch of roast vegetable pizza cooked on site.
- At 14:30hrs, the children were offered pork stroganoff with brown rice, cooked on site.
- At 16.30hrs, rice cakes and ham were provided by the service.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children’s snack / mealtimes.

- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in each of the playrooms.
- There was a designated chef preparing, cooking, and serving the service meals. Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes were available for children. Nutritious meals and snacks were served at regular times but there was flexibility.
- Children had two meals, two snacks, and two food groups in each meal / snack. If a child declined the main meal a healthy alternative was offered. The crockery and cutlery used were suitable for the children's age and stage of development.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance specifying the address of the service, catering for a full day care service for 39 children at any one time, with an expiry date of 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, was available.

The insurance covered

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- against fire and theft,
- outings,
- building.