

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY046
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Bubbles Creche
-------------------------	----------------

Address of Service:	No.7 Drisin, Ballymoneen Road, Knocknacarra, Co. Galway
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	H91 C4E3
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona O'Donohue
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	21/11/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	27
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

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

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

Description of service

Bubbles Crèche is an early years care and education service which offers full day care provision. It operates Monday to Thursday from 07:30 to 18:00 and on Friday from 07:30 to 17:00. While registered to accommodate children aged from 0 to 6 years of age, children currently attending are aged from 12 months to 6 years.

The premises is located within a residential estate in Knocknacarra, a suburb of Galway city. This service operates from a ground floor facility with 3 care rooms namely the Baby, Wobbler and Playschool. There is a designated sleep room, an office and a kitchen where food is stored and reheated by the on-site cook. A secure outdoor play area is located at the rear of service.

Staffing

There were 12 adults on the premises including a new staff member on induction, a weekly contractor, cook and registered provider.

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.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 (e). The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 23 safe sleep. As a result, the scope of the inspection included a total of 8 sleep records, 5 from the Baby and 3 from the Playschool care 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 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.
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise.
 - (b) The deputy was on the premises when the inspector arrived and the designated person in charge arrived from a sister service shortly afterwards. Both remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were on the premises while the early years children were present. The registered provider arrived onsite at 14:30.
 - (c) Staff rosters and documentary evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service.

(2) Recruitment files for 12 adults were reviewed:

- (a) Twenty one of the 24 required validated references were from past employers.
 - (b) The remaining 3 of 24 required validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all 12 adults, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
 - (d) Overseas police vetting was on file for nine adults who had lived outside of Ireland for six consecutive months or longer as adults.
- (4) There was evidence that the nine adults available to work directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent. The three remaining adults, who were not working directly with the children, did not require a childcare qualification.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children while the early years children were present in the service.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met.
- There were 8 adults working directly with 29 children in the morning and 8 adults working directly with 27 children in the afternoon. In addition, the manager was available, if required.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that either the designated person in charge and or the named person in charge were on the premises while the early years children were present.

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:

- Food and snacks were provided regularly during the day with breakfast of wheat and oat-based cereals and toast available from 07:30 until 09:00. Breadsticks, rice cakes and fruit were on offer for the mid-morning snack with pancakes, jam or butter on offer at 15:00. Lunch of pasta in a tomato sauce with garlic bread was served for at 11:45. The main hot meal of the day was provided by a company who provides food for children which is reheated by the service.
- Young children had the opportunity to feed themselves appropriate to their age and stage of development in the Baby care room. A staff member was observed assisting and guiding children who required help. Water was available in all the care rooms from individually labelled bottles and cups which were positioned within reach of the children.
- Age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery were available in each of the care rooms.
- Bibs were observed on the children in the Baby care room protecting the children's clothes while feeding.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and was handled in a positive and sensitive manner; a staff member was observed interacting and singing with children individually who responded by singing in both english and the staff member's native language.
- Children's toilet seats, steps ups and potties were available facilitating the children's growing toileting needs and allowing them to be active participants in the process when they are physically able to do so.
- Cosy rest areas were visible in all the care rooms fitted with soft furnishings in the form of child sized sofas, seats, bean bags and cushions where the children could relax away from noisy activities.
- The day of the inspection was cold and dry. Staff ensured that all children had coats, hats and appropriate footwear while playing in the outdoor play area.
- The staff members working with the children in all care rooms were observed to be sensitive and responsive in their interactions with the children. Two children who were settling in the Baby and Wobbler care rooms

were observed to be provided with additional support and comfort by the staff members in the rooms with reassuring words and cuddles.

Physical and material environment:

- The three care rooms were set up in clearly defined areas which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas. Examples included vinyl soft play in Toddler care room providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills of climbing and crawling on soft surfaces helping to improve balance and coordination.
- Materials and resources were age and stage appropriate and available in baskets on low-lying shelves. These were easily accessible and offered choice and promoted independence.
- Tables and chairs were set out to provide both group and individual opportunities, these were age and stage appropriate with children sitting for activities and mealtimes.
- A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the fully enclosed outdoor play area located at the rear of the service. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk for example: children were observed cycling on balance bikes on the playground's safety surface and a seesaw was available for balance and coordination. A covered sand box was positioned in the covered outdoor area providing opportunities for open ended sensory play and a playhouse was available for imaginary play along with boxes of vehicles and toys.

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 main door was secured upon arrival and was answered by the deputy. It was operated with a buzzer and a bell, preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service.
- All indoor and outdoor toys and play equipment appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving in the sanitary areas out of reach of the children.
- All flexes and cables were inaccessible by the children, preventing tripping or falls.

- The outdoor play area at the rear of the service was secured with a high concrete wall, metal fencing and gates with number pads, preventing children from leaving the area unsupervised. The ground surface was fitted with a playground safety surface providing impact absorption in the event of a fall.

Infection Control:

- Hygienic handwashing was observed by the adults and the children, before and after mealtimes, nappy changing and coming in from outdoor play.
- Picture and word instructions, reminding children of the hygienic handwashing procedure, were visible in the sanitary areas.
- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were observed to be supplied with thermostatically controlled water, between 36.9°C and 39.5°C within the recommended temperature of under 43°C, dispensing soap and handtowels. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.
- The five cots in the designated Baby sleep room were fitted with waterproof covers and mattresses.
- Nappy changing by a staff member in the Wobbler care room was observed to be carried out as per the service nappy changing procedure. Single use disposable gloves and aprons were removed after each nappy change and replaced with new ones and soiled nappies were secured in a bag before being deposited into the pedal operated, lined, lidded and sealed nappy bin. The nappy mat was sanitised after each use preventing cross infection.
- Children's personal belongings were stored on labelled hooks away from the floor area.
- A sterilising solution was available in the Baby care room for soothers observed in use on the day, helping to prevent the spread of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered on the day of inspection.
- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original container, placed out of reach of the children was available in the Baby care room in the event of an emergency. The expiry date was noted as 12/2026.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed staying with the children during sleep in the Wobbler and Playschool care rooms. Staff members sat between beds and rubbed the children's backs while soft piano music was playing in the background, the atmosphere was calm and relaxed. Staff in the care rooms stated at least one staff member is present in the sleep room while the children are sleeping.

- The following sleep equipment was placed 50 centimetres apart for safety and hygiene purposes, five cots in the designated Baby sleep room, ten stackable beds in the Wobbler care room and twelve beds in the Playschool care room.
- The temperature of the sleep rooms, where all children were aged over 12 months, was observed to be between 20.4°C and 20.5°C, within the recommended temperatures of 18°C and 22°C for children over 12 months.
- The blind cords in the sleep rooms were secured with hooks and were inaccessible to the children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire extinguishers were observed to be secured by brackets on the walls of the service.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor play area at the back of the service, a safe distance from the service.
- Fire doors were unobstructed aiding in the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. Contrary to the service's sleep and rest policy 10-minute physical sleep checks were not documented in a timely manner to ensure the safety of the sleeping children.

The following examples were observed in the Baby sleep room and in the Playschool room during the sleep period after lunch:

- At 11:50 in the Baby sleep room four were placed down to sleep in cots.
At 12:28 sleep records were requested and no documented records were available either on paper or on the application on the tablet.
In discussion, the staff member verbally gave the sleep and awake times of the five children up to 12:35, however these were not documented at this time.
- At 12:37 to 12.44 the Inspector was present in the Baby sleep room. No staff member entered the sleep room during this time. When requested, 10-minute physical sleep checks on a paper template for the five sleeping children from 12:05 onwards, including the 12:40 sleep check had since been documented on a paper template and were made available.
It was noted that a sleep check was documented as having taken place at 12:40 while the Inspector was in the sleep room, but no staff member was present in the sleep room. The staff member stated that this check had been carried out using the camera in the care room and not in

person contrary to the service’s sleep and rest policy which states “sleeping babies/children checked every 10 minutes by assigned staff. The sleep information will be recorded on a sleep chart including position, colour/pallor and breathing pattern.”

- Documented evidence that sleep checks were carried out consistently on each child was not evident in the Playschool room.

At 13:20 there were 12 children aged from 1 year 11 months to 2 years 9 months, on blue stackable beds, being monitored by 2 staff members. When records were sampled for 3 children, there were no documented sleep records available in either paper format or on the application on the tablet for 2 of the 3 children in the care room at this time.

Not monitoring young children as per guidance while sleeping may pose a risk to their safety

2. Appropriate sleep equipment was not used for children in both the Wobbler and the Playschool rooms. Thirteen children aged between 16 and 23 months were observed sleeping on blue stackable beds during the sleep period. This was at variance with the “Safe Sleep Guidance for Children under 24 months”

General Safety:

3. Children were observed to have access to a toilet cubicle which was being used as a storage area in the Wobbler nappy changing area. This cubicle could not be made inaccessible as it did not have a door. Several mops and a Hoover were stored in this area. Access to this area could pose a risk to the safety of the children.

This non-compliance was observed on the previous two inspections carried out on 7 June 2024 and 20 September 2024 and was not addressed by the registered provider.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider.

Safe Sleep:

1. A meeting was held with staff on Monday 24 November at 09:00 followed by a staff meeting at 18.00 with all staff. Discussion took place to reaffirm the service’s safe sleep policy in conjunction with Quality Regulatory Framework document. Staff were reminded of the requirement to record the physical sleep checks every 10 minutes observing and documenting each child’s breathing, colour and position.
2. Suitable sleep equipment is now in place for all children aged 12 months to 24 months who wish to rest/sleep in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Safe Sleep:

1. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
2. Photographs of the suitable sleep equipment in place for children aged 12 months to 24 months.

General Safety:

3. A photograph confirming that the mops and hoover have been removed from the cubicle.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 23.

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) First Aid Responder certificates (FAR) were available which indicated that four staff members were trained as First Aid Responders. The staff roster indicated at least one adult was available on opening at 07:30 and three staff members were available while the early years children were on the premises throughout the day.

(2)

(a) The well stocked first aid box, stored in the kitchen, was within reach of the adults.

(b) The first aid box was available while the early years children were present in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Evidence that monthly fire drills were carried out was available in the service. The last date recorded was noted as 21 October 2025. Previous fire drills were dated 30 September 2025 and 29 August 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The recorded dates were noted as 20 January 2025 and 21 May 2025, respectively.
- (2)
- (c) The required records were available on the premises for review.
- (4) The fire procedures were visible upon entry on the wall of the reception area ensuring that the staff members were aware of the steps to be followed in the event of an emergency, aiding the safe evacuation of the children and adults on the premises to a place of safety.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation was available to evidence that the registered provider had adequate insurance for the type of service provided and the number of children attending.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities

Non-Compliance Information

(e) There was one nappy changing mat in use in the Baby/Playschool sanitary area where two were required. The requirement is 1 nappy mat to 11 children. There was a total of 18 children, 6 from the Baby care room and 12 from the Playschool care room using the same nappy mat on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the registered provider sent in a photograph of two changing mats in the sanitary area the following day.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider.

(e) Two changing mats are now in use for both the Baby and Playschool children requiring nappy changing.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate.

(e) A photograph of two changing mats in the Baby/Playschool sanitary area with a divider in place.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliance identified under regulation 29.