

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY136				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Blossoms Childcare Centre				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Camp Street, Oughterard, Co. Galway				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jennifer Geoghegan Tierney				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day Care				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/06/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>23</td> <td>PM</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> </table>	AM	23	PM	n/a
AM	23	PM	n/a		

<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>	F Nic Dhonnacha
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This private pre-school is registered as a full day care service. Currently no child attends full day care hours at present. Only children attending sessional hours are currently offered sessional care programme / Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme from 09.00hrs to 12.00hrs and 9.00 to 12.30hrs, from Monday to Friday. Additionally, the service offers a school age programme from 13.30hrs to 17.30hrs for school aged children.

The pre-school service is in the village of Oughterard, Co Galway. There were 3 playrooms namely the Junior pre-school playroom on the ground floor and the Senior preschool (Montessori) playroom and the Wobbler/Toddler playroom on the first floor. The designated sleep room has been converted to a school age children s playroom now, adjacent to the Junior pre-school playroom. The children have access to secure outdoor play area to the rear of the premises for children’s play activities, exploration, and new challenges. The service offers a child centred, play based pedagogy focusing on the children’s emerging interests with an element of Montessori included.

### Staffing

On the day of inspection there were 5 adults on the premises including the registered provider. The registered provider is on the premises on a daily basis. There is a named person in charge and a named designated deputy and a person who provides auxiliary relief when required.

A total of 4 adults work directly with the children and hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. The adult staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education.

### 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, 11, 19, 23, and 25 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16, 20 and 26. 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 provider 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

(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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

- (b) 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 registered provider advised that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

(2)(a)(b) Ten written validated references, on file for the staff members were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the five staff members.

- (d) Not applicable, as none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years and thereby did not require police vetting.
- (4) Four of the five staff held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the four staff working directly with the children.

### 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 an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) Adult child ratios were adhered to on the morning of the inspection, there were 23 pre-school children aged between 2 years 3 months to 5 years attending the service sessional care programme.

There were 4 childcare staff working directly with the children that included the registered provider, who additionally assisted with the administration function of the inspection. Additionally, there was a person who carried out auxiliary duties.

At all times during the period of inspection, the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained.

On the morning of the inspection at 09.45hrs there were 23 pre-school children

- 3 children aged 2-3years with one adult directly caring for these children.
- 20 children aged 3-5 years with three adults directly caring for these children.

At 13.30 hrs the school age programme commenced and three staff members including the registered provider work directly with these children.

(8) (a) The registered provider and documentary evidence ensured that two adults are on the premises at all times.

## 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;

### Compliance Information

- (i) Details of the staff rosters for each staff member was maintained on a daily basis in each of the three playrooms.
- (h) Records of attendance for each child attending the Early Childhood Care and Education programme in the Junior Preschool and Montessori playroom were maintained with details of their arrival and departure.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (h) Records of attendance with details of the time of arrival and departure were not maintained for the children attending the Wobbler/ Toddler playroom. This posed a risk to the safety of both staff and children in the event of an emergency. This non-compliance was issued on the previous inspection 9/11/2023.

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

On the 5/07/2024 the registered provider advised of the following

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

New attendance books have been purchased for use in each of the playrooms and daily records will be maintained from September 2024.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs have been submitted.

## Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16 (h) has been adequately addressed.

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

### Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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

(1) (a)

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack 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 and toilet training.
- On the day of the inspection, the children in the Wobbler/ Toddler room and Junior Preschool playroom 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 had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

### Supporting Relationships

- The staff were observed to be kind soft spoken and showed good listening skills while listening while the children communicated their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language. The staff were noticed encouraging children to think

critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking, nurturing and comforting children.

- 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.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop off and collection times, a private social media application and via profile scrapbooks using observations and including samples of a child's work, themes interests and arts and craft. The present theme of the week was Summertime.
- Staff observations, a child's milestones and individual learning stories were captured and maintained.
- Staff collated for each child a profile scrapbook my learning journal, showing the 'child's journey' using observations and including samples of a child's work.

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

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

*(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

*(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- The children had access to enough varied materials and equipment, which were rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests.

- Materials and equipment were arranged so they were visible and readily accessible to promote independent access by children. There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
- The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school. Low shelving were accessible to the children and storage boxes with toys and play materials were clearly labelled with visual pictures.
- The child size tables and chairs provided for the children were maintained in good condition and were arranged by the adults to facilitate the children to sit together at their mealtimes and for tabletop activities.
- There were defined interest areas in each of the playrooms with a wide variety of toys and play materials which included a home corner, library, small animals, blocks, construction, puzzles, jigsaws, arts and crafts, dolls, buggies, Montessori materials, musical instruments, garages, cars, trucks, tracks and sand basins.
- Displayed on the walls of each of the playrooms were art and craft work, visual aids and posters including birthdays, my family, curriculum, our adventure begins, the life cycle of the frog, colours, shapes, numbers and emotions.

### (3)(a) OUTDOOR AREA:

- The outdoor areas to the rear of the service were secured by means of a high blocked walls and wooden fencing and gates. The outdoor area was divided into 3 zones for the children in each playroom.
- There was a combination of surfaces including artificial grass, tarmacadam, and an impact absorbing surface.
- Items included: ride on toys, push toys, balance beams, and a large playhouse, a household area with a kitchen, pots, pans, and utensils, child sized tables, chairs, and seating areas, a climbing frame, slide and see saws, a planting area, mounted flower shaped blackboards,
- There was a large storage shed, which was secured for storage of play equipment and materials for indoor and outdoor use. Additionally, there was a shelving unit to store the children's belongings and all weather clothing.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. Facilities for rest were not clearly defined or adequately developed within the Junior Preschool Playroom. While it is acknowledged there was an activity mat and one small child size armchair and two cushions. There were limited materials available, where a child could rest/relax or opt out of an activity if they choose. This non-compliance was issued on the previous inspection 9/11/2023.
2. Adequate facilities for the provision of sleep and rest for children under 2 years of age were unavailable.

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

On the 10/6/2024 and 5/07/2024 the registered provider advised of the following.

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

1. A new soft wipeable mat was purchased with new cushions to develop the rest area in the Junior Preschool playroom.
2. A new floor bed and mattress was purchased following inspection and will be used if any children under 2 years of age attend the preschool and show signs of tiredness and require a sleep.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

1. A photograph of new wipeable matting and animal featured cushions was submitted.
2. A copy of a purchase receipt for the new floor bed and mattress was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 20 (1) (b) has been adequately addressed.

### 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:

- There was a secure buzzer access system, into the main entrance front doors.
- The kitchen staff sanitary area and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout both buildings were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored securely inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were secured and or inaccessible to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any hazard or potential risk to the pre-school child.

##### Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. The water for hand washing in the wash hand basins throughout the service were thermostatically controlled. The temperatures were recorded at a normal range below 43.0°C to avoid the risk of scalding a child.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- There was one designated nappy changing area with two wash hand basins. The children in nappies were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves. There was a foot pedalled airtight sealable bin for the disposal of nappies.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Childrens lunches which contained perishable items were stored in the service fridge.
- The service had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

### Safe Sleep:

- Stackable beds and individual linen were available for children over 2 years of age sleep provision if required.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 25 - First aid

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-*  
*(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*  
*(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff had current First Aid Responder training.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the kitchen.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped, in date and available to the children attending the pre-school 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (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) Records were available of the monthly fire drills carried out in the preschool service. The last drill was dated 24/5/2024.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 15/04/2024.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(b)
- Records were unavailable of the annual service in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment, the last service was dated 25/04/2023.

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

On the 4/07/2024 the registered provider advised of the following.

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The electrical company was contacted to arrange a maintenance check of the firefighting equipment following inspection. The service was carried out on the 18/06/2024.

The records will be placed on the notice board as a reminder to book a maintenance check annually.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs were submitted.

#### Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 (1) (b) has been adequately addressed.