

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015KE165

**Name of Service:** The Children's House

**Address of Service:** 4 The Chapel Mews, Chapel Lane, Sallins, Co. Kildare

**Eircode:** W91 X883

**Name of Registered Provider:** Siobhan Farrell

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 15/01/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	22	PM	n/a
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare

**Inspection undertaken by:** R. Brien

**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** Click or tap here to enter text.

## Description of service

The Children's House is a privately owned sessional service which provides care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate 2 morning sessions from 09:00 to 12:00 and 09:30 to 12:30 and 2 afternoon sessions from 13:00 to 16:00 and 13:15 to 16:15, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a purpose-built ground floor premises in an urban, residential area of Sallins, Co Kildare. There are two care rooms in the service and there is a fully enclosed, sheltered outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

## Staffing

The service currently employs six staff. There were four staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection who were supported by the 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/records/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 the following regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b),(2),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,

11 (1),(3) – Staffing levels,  
16 (1)(j),(k) – Record in relation to a pre-school service,  
19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,  
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,  
25 – First aid.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 (1)(j),(k) – Record in relation to a pre-school service.

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

(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

(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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
(a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)  
The files of six adults were reviewed as part of the inspection including three adults who commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2022. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the 12 validated, written references that were required, 10 were available from a past employer and 2 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for six adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent. One staff member held a letter of eligibility to practice from the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA)

## Non-Compliance Information

(3)

The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all adults were suitable to work in an early years service prior to their commencement as outlined below:

- The registered provider did not ensure that a Garda vetting disclosure was obtained for two adults prior to them commencing work in the service as follows;
  - One staff member commenced working in the service on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 2023 and Garda vetting was obtained on the 24<sup>th</sup> January 2023.
  - One staff member commenced working in the service on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and Garda vetting was obtained on the 5<sup>th</sup> November 2024.
- Two references in respect of one adult were not validated prior to the adult commencing employment. The adult commenced working in the service on the 16<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and references had been validated on the 17<sup>th</sup> September 2024 and the 27<sup>th</sup> September 2024.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(3)

- Our Garda Vetting Policy has been updated to emphasise that Garda vetting must be obtained prior to commencement of employment. I have advised the rest of the staff of this; I apologise as I was sincerely under the impression that due to both staff having current Garda vetting from their previous employment, & both being classroom assistants - therefore not alone in the class with the children but always under supervision from the Lead Educator - that it was permissible to have them supervised in the setting until their next Garda vetting was received – otherwise we would not have been able to accommodate some of the children in the preschool, as there were delays in the vetting process.
- We managed to make contact & validate the references within 2 weeks of the staff member starting with us. I have updated our Recruitment Policy to state that references must be validated prior to commencement of employment.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

### **Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

### 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.*

*(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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 22 children attending being supervised by 4 adults on the day of inspection.

### 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:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

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

#### Compliance Information

(j)

A sample of 10 medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k)

A sample of 10 accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

## 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*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that lunch is provided by the service. Lunch took place at 10:45. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers during their meal and staff were observed offering children a choice of fruit, vegetables and crackers. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children had a drink with their meal. Lunchtime was observed to be relaxed and sociable.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. Inspectors observed children cleaning up after their play, handing out plates and cups, washing their dishes following lunchtime and using the toilet independently. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy. Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection time and using an online application.



The care rooms were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials, manipulative play and a rest area and library. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos were displayed at the children's level and children's art work was displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for coats. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

There was a fully enclosed, sheltered outdoor area with artificial grass surfacing at the rear of the premises. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was available to the children in this area. All children accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection and were observed engaging in imaginary and energetic play.

### 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 entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, after outdoor play and before lunch.

- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

### Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.
- There was a documented care plan available for a child attending the service who required medication. Staff were aware of the treatment plan and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures to follow when administering the medication.

### Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.

## 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)

A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the room.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.