

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK007			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bluebells Crèche			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	78/79 Robertshill, Circular Road, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny			
<b>Eircode:</b>	R95 Y589			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lorraine Knowles			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/12/2023			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	31	PM	22
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N. Thornton			
<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

Bluebells Crèche provides full day, part-time and sessional childcare services to preschool children aged from 1 to 6 years. The service is located in the Robertshill residential estate, off the Circular Road on the outskirts of Kilkenny city. The service operates from a residential house and operates from 08:00 to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year.

There are three preschool classrooms, the baby/wobbler classroom, located on the ground floor, the toddler and preschool classrooms both located on the first floor. A designated sleep room is also provided on the ground floor and there is an outdoor play area, onsite, at the back of the premises.

### Staffing

There are 11 staff members employed in the service, including the registered provider. All staff members working directly with the preschool children in the service held at least a minimum Level 5 qualification in Early Childhood Care 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

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

11(1)(2)(8)-Staffing Levels,

22-Food and Drink,

23-Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included all the preschool rooms and the outdoor play area.

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 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.

(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) The inspector observed that there was a designated person in charge in the service. A named deputy designated person in charge was also available to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was onsite in the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) A clear management structure was observed in practice and was also clearly documented, outlining the roles and responsibilities of each staff member employed in the service.

(2) Staff files for 11 staff members were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were on file for each staff member employed in the service.

(d) Police vetting was available on file, for each of six staff members, who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six months.

(3) On review of files the inspector was assured that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) had been completed prior to staff members commencing employment in the service.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file for each staff member working directly with the children, demonstrating that staff held at least the minimum Level 5 ranging to Level 8 qualifications in early childhood care and education on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Framework.

## Part III – Management and Staff

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

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's policies and procedures as required by Schedule 5 were available in the service and open for inspection. On review of the documents, the inspector was assured that the written policies were specific to the service and had been effectively communicated to the staff as part of their induction prior to commencement of employment in the service and annually post revision by the registered provider.

### 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) Throughout the inspection, an adequate number of staff members were observed directly caring for and supervising the children in attendance.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children as required by schedule 6 was maintained as follows:
- In the Baby/Wobbler room there were 6 children aged 1 to 2 years directly cared for by 2 staff members for a full day care service.
- In the Toddler room there were 7 children aged 2 to 2 years and 8 months, being cared for and supervised by 2 staff members. In the afternoon, the number of children was reduced to 4 children directly supervised by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room, 18 children aged 3 to 6 years of age were cared for and supervised by 3 staff members and in the afternoon, there were 12 children directly supervised by 2 staff members.
- (8) The designated person in charge ensured that there were always at least two staff members on the premises. The inspector observed that the staff roster and past staff rosters available reflected this.

## 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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and warm meals were prepared and cooked in the designated kitchen area onsite. A menu plan was displayed on the wall for parents to see. Drinking water was available and accessible to all the children in the older classrooms. Staff in the baby /wobbler room ensured that the children had regular water from the sip cups and were observed by the inspector to be responsive to children when they signalled that they wanted their cup.

Staff informed the inspector that children who arrived at the service early were provided with breakfast, if they had not eaten breakfast at home. A selection of wheat, oat and rice-based cereals were available.

Children attending the early childhood care and education (ECCE) session bought their snack from home, while children present in the service for full day care were provided with a selection of fruit pieces - apple, banana, clementine and breadsticks or toast.

The main meal prepared and cooked in the service was spaghetti bolognaise which contained beef mince and a selection of finely chopped vegetables in a tomato-based sauce and pasta. The evening meal was beans on toast and yoghurts.

Additional foods such as sliced ham, cheese, hummus, crackers, rice cakes and soup were available in the kitchen refrigerator, if a child did not like the dishes offered from the menu.

Special dietary needs were also catered for in line with the service’s healthy eating policy.

## 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 entrance to the service was secured with a call bell system. A reception area was located on the ground floor. Staff were required to answer the call bell system to permit entry to the service, therefore, children could not exit the service unsupervised and visitors to the service could only enter the premises once authorised by the staff.

The play area at the back of the building was secured by a locked high gate at the side of the building and a high block wall. Staff informed and demonstrated to the inspector that a daily risk assessment was carried out prior to children using the outdoor play area. Children did not access the outdoor play area on the day of inspection as a weather warning was in operation and heavy rain was falling.

##### Infection Control:

The staff and children in the service were observed to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing, using tissues for runny noses, after messy play and in preparation for meal or snack time, in line with the service's infection control policy. Children's toilet and nappy changing needs were supported as required by the staff, in line with the toileting and nappy changing policies contained in the service's infection control policy. The inspector observed that cleaning procedures were effectively adhered to in the service, with cleaning schedules followed and recorded.

##### Administration of Medication:

On review of a sample of six administration of medication records, staff were observed to carry out and record administration of medication procedures in line with the service's administration of medication policy.

##### Safe Sleep:

A designated sleep room was provided in the service with a total of three standard cots for children aged 1-2 years and a cot bed. A supply of stackable beds was also available for children over 2 years to avail of if they wished to sleep during the day.

Suitable bed linen consisting of fitted bed sheets and cellular blankets were provided for individual children. Staff were observed to implement the service's safe sleep policy in their practice, when putting children down to sleep, carrying out physical checks on each sleeping child's colour, breathing and sleep position every 10 minutes, and recording same.

**Outing:**

An adequate outings policy was in place in the service, however the designated person in charge informed the inspector that outings were currently not operated away from the service.

### 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) There were three staff members employed in the service who had current first aid responder (FAR) training. Two staff members with FAR training were present in the service throughout the inspection. On review of the staff roster, the registered provider demonstrated that there was always one staff member with FAR training onsite, while children attended the service.

(2)(a) A first aid box was available in the service and located in the office area on the ground floor.

(b) The first aid box was always available for the children and records were maintained to demonstrate that it was checked monthly to ensure that its contents were adequate and in date.

### 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.
- (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) A record of monthly fire drills carried out in the service was maintained by the registered provider. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place in November 2023.
- (b) Records of the annual maintenance checks of the service's firefighting equipment and fire alarm system were documented. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment and fire alarm system was recorded as having taken place on the 23 November 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hall on the ground floor and on a noticeboard on the first floor.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate displaying adequate insurance for a full day childcare service for up to 36 preschool children was available for inspection.