

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015KK089

Name of Service: Tiddlywinks Creche

Address of Service: 1 Rath Ullard, Bonnettsrath Road, New Orchard, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny

Eircode:

Name of Registered Provider: Shelley Woodgate

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 22/04/2025

| | | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 39 | PM | 36 |
| | | | | |

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate,
Tusla Child and Family Agency,
Athy Road,
Carlow.

Inspection undertaken by: Norma Thornton

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

Tiddlywinks Creche is a full day childcare service located in the Rath Ullard residential estate in Kilkenny city. The service operates from a purpose-built childcare building consisting of five classrooms, catering for children aged 1 to 6 years of age, and providing full day care, part-time and sessional early childhood care and education (ECCE) childcare services. The service is open from 07:50 to 18:00 hours Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There were 18 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider and a chef. All staff members working directly with the preschool children in the service held a qualification in early childhood care and education ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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.

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 16 (1), 21,22, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 10, 15, 16 (1), 21, 22, 23, and 24. As a result, the scope of the inspection included all classrooms and the outdoor play areas.

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*
- (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 and deputy designated person in charge were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The staff roster demonstrated that one of the following, the registered provider, designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge, was always onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear outline of the management of the structure was displayed in the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

(2) Staff files for 18 staff members, including the registered provider and chef employed in the service, were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each of the 18 staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member employed in the service had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for inspection, for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 8 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national 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

On review of a sample of the service's policies the inspector was assured that the registered providers ensured that all required documents specified in Schedule 5, were available in the service and were communicated to the staff as part of their induction process on commencing employment in the service and revised annually. The information provided in the following policies: Statement of Purpose and Function, Complaints policy, Fire Safety Policy and Policy on Authorisation to Collect Children was found to be appropriate and observed to be implemented in practice in the service.

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) There were always, during the inspection, an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children. An additional staff member and the registered provider were supernumerary and available to provide support in any of the five classrooms in operation and to provide relief for staff breaks.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the four classrooms on the morning and afternoon of the inspection.

In the Wobbler room there were 8 children aged 1 to 2 years present for a full day care service cared for by 2 staff members.

In the Toddler room 1, there were 5 children aged 2 to 3 years cared for by 1 staff member throughout the morning and in the evening, there were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years cared for by 1 staff member.

In Toddler room 2, There were 6 children aged 2 to 3 years present for a full day care service, cared for by 1 staff member throughout the inspection.

In the Junior ECCE (“Brilliant Butterfly Room”) there were 12 children aged 3 to 4 years present throughout the morning ECCE session with 2 staff members.

In the afternoon there were 8 children aged 3 to 5 years remained for the full day care service with 1 staff member.

In the Senior ECCE (“Sunflowers Room”) there were 8 children aged 4 to 5 years present, for a full day care service with 2 staff members caring for them throughout the morning and 1 staff member in the evening.

The registered provider was also present to support staff during and provide relief for staff breaks.

(8)(a) On review of the staff roster and in discussion with the staff the inspector was assured that there were always at least 2 adults on the premises while children were in attendance in the service.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 18 records of pre-school children, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each preschool child.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*

- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (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

(1)(a) – (i) On review of documents and staff files available in the service and open for inspection the inspector was assured that the registered provider-maintained records in writing of the information required in relation to elements (a) to (i).

(k)The inspector reviewed a sample of five accident and incident reports which had been recorded by staff members. Each record detailed and recorded appropriately the incident which occurred, the actions taken and outcomes. Each report demonstrated that the incident had been reported to the child’s parent or guardian, with parent/guardians’ signatures clearly documented.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) While it was observed that the service maintained detailed records of any medication administered to a child while in the service, the media application on which the records were stored, did not demonstrate where the child’s parent/ guardian’s signed parental consent was recorded.

It is acknowledged that the registered provider submitted a revised hard copy of an administration of medication form following inspection, which was immediately implemented in practice to ensure that parents’ signed consents were clearly recorded.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have reviewed our administration of medication forms and reinstated the hard copy administration of medication forms to ensure that parents'/ guardians' consent for administration of medications is clearly documented.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of new administration of medication form.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider are appropriate to address the non-compliances. The implementation of these actions will be reviewed on next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

There was suitable furniture, play and work equipment provided in each of the classrooms which were appropriate to the specific age and developmental needs of the children in attendance. Some children sat comfortably on the child sized chairs and tables provided in each classroom while others navigated their classrooms' easily to access materials and resources which were stored at the children's level on visually labelled shelves or in storage boxes which the children could easily manage.

In the wobbler and toddler rooms, adult seating was provided for adults to sit and engage with children comfortably. The sleep rooms provided a quiet temperature regulated environment with appropriate sleep equipment for babies and children to rest during the day.

In the outdoor play areas, the registered provider ensured that there was a variety of areas such as the construction and gravel area for children to dig and play with the shovels and transport vehicles provides or to play imaginatively in the mud kitchen, large wooden tractor or playhouses provided. Outdoor picnic tables provided the children with opportunities to sit, enjoy tabletop or creative activities outdoors or just to rest while watching their friends play.

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 chef employed in the service to prepare and cook the main meals on site, in the service kitchen.

In the mornings, breakfast was provided to children who attended the service early and who may not have had the opportunity to have breakfast at home. A choice of wheat-based cereals with warm or cold milk was offered. At snack time at 10:00 hours, the children brought their snacks from home or else the service provided a snack which was comprised of one food from the carbohydrate group and some fruit.

A two-week dinner plan was in place in the service and parents were informed of what meals were offered daily. Included in the dinner menus were vegetable pasta, spaghetti bolognese, roast chicken vegetables and potato, boiled ham, vegetables and potato, shepherd's pie, fish and vegetables, chicken curry, fish and chips, pizza or nuggets and chips.

On the day of inspection, the main meal was spaghetti bolognese which included ground beef steak mince, mixed vegetables and a homemade tomato sauce with garlic bread.

Options of mashed potato, vegetables and sweet potato were also available if children didn't want pasta.

Tea options included sausage rolls, ham and cheese sandwiches, beans or pasta hoops on toast, scrambled egg on brown bread, vegetable soup and brown bread, waffles and beans, toasted cheese and ham wraps, pancakes.

Additional snacks provided in the service consisted of crackers/ scones with butter and jam, homemade fairy cakes, banana bread, fruit and yogurts.

Drinking water was readily available in each classroom and milk or water was provided at meal and snack times.

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 gated entrance to the service grounds was secured with a keypad call bell system which only permitted entry to authorised persons. The entrance door to the childcare building was secured with a keypad system. The perimeter of the service and outdoor play areas was secured by a high cement block wall. This helped to reduce the risk of any potential unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises and reduced the risk of any child exiting the service unsupervised. Parents were observed accompanying and supervising their children to and from the classrooms at drop off and collection times.

Infection Control:

The service had appropriate toilet and nappy changing facilities provided to meet the numbers and needs of the children in each classroom. All sanitary facilities contained handwash basins, supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use.

Children were observed to use the toilet and hand washing facilities with ease, while staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly after using the toilet, after messy and outdoor play and before snack and mealtimes. Staff were observed to carry out nappy changing procedures in line with the service's nappy changing policy and in adherence with the service's hand washing and infection control policy.

Safe Sleep:

There was one sleep room available adjacent to the wobbler room containing six standard cots for 1- to 2-year-olds. Staff were observed to ensure that the temperature of the sleep room was maintained within the recommended range of 16 to 20°C.

Stackable beds were available for any child older than 2 years of age to sleep on if they wished to take a nap. Staff were observed to physically check and record the room temperature and sleeping children's physical checks, which included colour, breathing and sleep position every 10 minutes.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place, to implement when taking children on an outing away from the service. The policy detailed the preparation, risk assessment and communication with parents/guardians prior

to the outing, the precautions, and procedures to be taken prior to and during the outing and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of attendance records the inspector was assured that the registered provider and staff recorded the checking in and out of each child attending the service daily, detailing each child's time of entry and exit daily.

(3)(a) The staff and registered provider assured the inspector that no other person apart from children attending the service, parents/guardians dropping or collecting children, staff members could enter the premises without being approved by a staff member.

(b) The inspector observed that a daily record was maintained of any authorised visitors permitted entry to the service. The inspector was requested to record their entry to the service, which included the date, name, contact number, reason for entry, who approved the access and time of entry and departure.

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 six staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, there were at least two staff members with FAR training present. This was reflected in the staff roster reviewed by the inspector on the day of inspection.
- (2) (a)(b) There was a first aid point with a first aid box available in the Junior ECCE room and a first aid cabinet in the utility room on the ground floor. The first aid contents were adequate, and records demonstrated that the first aid contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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 on the 12 February 2025.

(b) Records of the annual maintenance checks of the service’s firefighting equipment and fire alarm system were maintained. The last maintenance check for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place on the 17 February 2025. The maintenance record for the fire smoke alarm was recorded as having taken place on the 13 March 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on a notice board in the front entrance hall. A fire assembly point was clearly signed in the outdoor play area.

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 44 preschool children was displayed on the notice board in the entrance hall.

The insurance certificate provided cover from 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.