

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD030			
Name of Service:	Granard Community Childcare Facility			
Address of Service:	The Hill, Granard, Co. Longford			
Eircode:	N39 TF25			
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline O Reilly			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date 1 of Inspection:	04/05/2023			
Date 2 of Inspection:	05/05/2023			
No of pre-school children Day 1	AM	62	PM	33
No of pre-school children Day 2	AM	57	PM	54
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.			
Inspection undertaken by:	A Kennedy & H Heagney			
Title:	Early Years Inspectors			

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
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Description of service

This community operated pre-school was established in 1991. The service offers full day care and part time care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs, for children aged between 0 to 6 years, from Monday to Friday. Additionally, an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programmes and sessional care programmes is offered. Additionally, the service operates an afterschool programme for school aged children. The service is registered to cater for a maximum number of 111 children, at any one time. There are six preschool playrooms, the Nursery room, the Creche room, the Snowdrops room, the Playschool room, the Preschool room, and the Montessori room, which are on the ground floor. On the inspection days, the Nursery was not operating. There are designated school aged areas on the first floor and an additional school age service in the main street of Granard. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. There are two sleep rooms with twelve cots, available for younger children requiring sleep provision. Additionally, there are ten stackable beds, for older children's sleep provision. Quiet rest areas are available in each playroom for children to relax. There are outdoor play areas to the rear and sides of the premises. The service offers a child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on Montessori and emerging interests.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are thirty-three staff working in the premises. Twenty-seven staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. One staff member is on a childcare work placement and supervised when interacting with the children. There are three staff designated to the care of the school aged children. There are two chefs who prepare, cook, and serve the service meals / snacks. There is a caretaker for ongoing repair and maintenance. Additionally, at the time of inspection, there was a student on a childcare work placement, was supervised when interacting with the children.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the days 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)

There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputize in the service.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2)(a)&(b)

The files for the thirty-three staff and the one student on a childcare placement were reviewed.

Sixty-eight of the sixty-eight, written validated references on file in respect of the thirty-three staff and one student over the age of 18 years on a childcare placement, were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the thirty-three staff and the one student over the age of 18 years, on a childcare work placement.

(d)
Six staff, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting. It is acknowledged that where applicable, these vetting's were translated by a reputable source.

(4)
The twenty-seven staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2)
The person in charge ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

On the morning of Day 1 of the inspection, there were 62 children present

- 14 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 16 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 32 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were 19 staff directly caring for these children.

Additionally, the person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.

There was a chef designated to kitchen duties, preparing, and serving the service meals. There was a caretaker involved in maintenance work.

In the afternoon of Day 1, there were 33 children present

- 10 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 6 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 17 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were eight staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.

In the afternoon, there were 23 school age children attending the services school age programme being directly cared for by three designated staff.

There was a chef designated to kitchen duties, preparing, and serving the service meals. There was a caretaker involved in maintenance work.

On the morning of Day 2 of the inspection, there were 57 children present

- 13 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 14 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 30 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were eighteen staff directly caring for these children and one adult on a childcare work placement who was supervised when caring for the children.

Additionally, the person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.

There was a chef designated to kitchen duties, preparing, and serving the service meals.

In the afternoon of Day 2, there were 54 children present

- 10 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 14 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 30 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were fourteen staff directly caring for these children. Additionally, the person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection. There was a student on a childcare work placement who was supervised when interacting with the children.

Additionally, there were 16 school aged children being directly cared for by two designated staff.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) &(i)

A sample of twenty-five children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The twenty-five random children's records contained the following:

The name and date of birth of the child.

The date on which the child first attended the service.

The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).

The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.

Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.

The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.

A record of any immunisations the child has had.

Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.

(4) & (5)

The person in charge advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that the pre-school had a system to allow all relevant children's records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending the service.

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.

Compliance Information

- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible.
- The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The staff complied with the service's healthy eating policy.
- The tables and chairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development. Highchairs were available to facilitate feeding younger children in the Nursery and Creche rooms.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting.
- On Day 1 of the inspection, twenty-six children from the Creche room, Snowdrops room, and Playschool room who wore nappies were changed in a sensitive and timely manner, on a regular basis. On Day 2 of

the inspection, twenty-four children from the Creche room, and Snowdrops room, who wore nappies were changed in a sensitive and timely manner, on a regular basis.

- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children could move about freely and explore their environment. The children were observed at free play, stacking, hammering, building, playing doctors, and dressing up. The children played with tracks / transport vehicles, at pretend kitchen / house, dancing to action songs / nursery rhymes and at messy play/ artwork. On Day 1 of the inspection, the older children from the Preschool room and Playschool room had a visit from two representatives of the Irish Guide Dog association and a guide dog. While the children in the Montessori room, had an action song session from a representative of Music Generation.

The staff read stories and children questioned the characters and gave their views. The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’, ‘how many are there?’, and ‘where is that?’. The staff acknowledged a child’s achievements, and the children were observed having fun.

In the outdoor area, the children played in the outdoor mud kitchens, at sand play, at pretend play, climbing on crates, stacking, brushing, digging, riding on tractors/ bicycles / push cars, at chalk play, on see saws, chasing, running, and playing catch.

- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -
 - having a key person system for each child,
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
 - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language,
 - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
 - providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
 - providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
 - working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.

- Parents/guardians signed a parental agreement form and received a parent handbook with the service ethos, daily routines, strategies for supporting the children and the updated policies, procedures, response plans.
- On speaking with the staff, the inspectors were informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages, by phone calls, instant messaging application and by email.
- The younger children had individual my child record communication books advising of the child's likes, interests, needs and preferences. The records also included food and sleep provision, nappy changes, and any individual childcare needs. These records were given to parents and guardians daily.
- The staff created individual learning journals / profile scrapbooks for each child, showing the themes, experiences, and activities engaged in, along with photographs. The themes to date included fundamental play (playdough, pretend, paint, blocks, water), where is my family, playing outside, happy birthday, artwork, Autumn, Halloween, group games, tabletop activities, music generation, Christmas, sensory play, fun with snow, Valentines Day, dinner time, resting, Easter, fun time, and my tree.
- The service collated an 'inspiration book' with prompts, words of wisdom and gentle reminders for staff to scaffold children's learning and development.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences. The inspectors noted the staff acknowledged a child's achievements 'that is great' 'well done' and used questions such as 'what should we do next?', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Older children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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 19 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 design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child's wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service. The environment provided a range of challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for all children in line with their stage of development. The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The play materials and environment were changeable, flexible, and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests of the children. The staff encouraged children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, and equipment in the environment, based on the child's choices, age and stage of development.

The Playrooms

The indoor playrooms were designed and arranged to

- maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter,
- accommodate children individually, and in small groups,
- divide the space into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children's play and learning,
- give all children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development.
- The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and was readily accessible by the pre-school children.

- The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.

Creche room

Materials and items of interest included a play kitchen with utensils, a tea set and food items. There was a selection of shape sorters, jigsaws of varying levels of difficulty, a selection of balls, musical toys, telephones, and soft toys. There was a garage with a selection of cars, activity cubes, a selection of musical instruments and a matted area with books to enable a child to rest/opt out of activities. There were art and craft materials including a selection of paper/card, paints, glue, stickers, brushes, playdough, and shape sorters / playdough accessories. Displayed on the walls were visual aids, wooden sensorial boards with varying textures and tasks, mirrors, a birthday display and posters on animals and a photographic display on families.

Snowdrops room

Materials and items of interest included a kitchen with utensils, cutlery, a sink, and pot/pans. There was a shop, with a cash register, shopping trolley, dolls, prams and cots. There were art and craft materials including paints, sponges, paper, playdough and accessories, glue, and brushes. There were shape sorters, insets, puzzles, and games. There were stacking shapes, a selection of shape sorters and jigsaws of varying levels of difficulty. There were transport vehicles with a garage. There were dinosaurs, animals, and farmyards. There was a construction work bench with tools and a toolbox. There was a reading area with a selection of age-appropriate books. There were dress up outfits with accessories for role play. Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters on the letters of the alphabet, sensory boards, the children's artwork, family photographs and happy birthday.

Playschool room

Materials and items of interest included a kitchen with utensils, ice trays, scoops, baskets, cutlery, a sink, a coffee maker, and pot/ pans. There was a shop register, shopping trolley, dolls, prams, cots. There was a vanity dresser with a mirror and beauty items. There were art and craft materials including paints, paper, playdough, blackboards, activity trays and chalk. There were shape sorters, insets, puzzles, and games. There were stacking shapes and hammering items. There were transport vehicles, tracks, links, connectors, magnets, connectors, rods, and pins. There were dinosaurs, animals, and farmyards. There was a construction table with tools and a toolbox. There was a house, dolls, doll clothing, potato heads, doctors sets and small world items. Displayed on the walls were visual aids, class rules, family photographs and notice boards with educational materials.

Preschool room

Materials and items of interest included a kitchen with utensils, baskets, cutlery, a sink, and pot/ pans. There were a selection of dolls, cots, prams, and buggies. There was a quiet area with couches, cushions, and a selection of books to enable a child to relax. There was a dress up area with a selection of dress up clothing and accessories and a wall mounted mirror. There was also a vanity dresser with a mirror and beauty items. There were art and craft materials including paints, paper, playdough, blackboards, activity trays and chalk. There were shape sorters, insets, puzzles, and games. There were stacking shapes and hammering items. There were transport vehicles, tracks, links, connectors, magnets, connectors, rods, and pins. There were dinosaurs, animals, and farmyards. There was a construction table with tools and a toolbox. There was a dolls house with play accessories and small world items.

Displayed on the walls were the children artwork, and visual aids, and photographs. There were displays of the children at work in the preschool environment, and posters on the daily routine / class rules. There were letters of the alphabet, colours, family photographs and notice boards with educational materials.

Montessori room

Materials and items of interest included a home area with a kitchen and play accessories. There was a shop area with a cash register, food items, shopping baskets and shopping trolleys. There was a child sized couch with cushions and a selection of age-appropriate book. There was a large selection of Montessori materials including practical life exercise, sensorial exercises, and materials for early introduction to language and mathematics. There was a tabletop area with a large selection of pegs and peg boards, shape sorters, buttons, threading materials and jigsaws of varying levels of difficulty. There were a large selection of trucks, cars and pirate ships and a selection of small world items to include army, dinosaurs, farm, and zoo animals. There was a construction area with a selection of wooden and plastic blocks. There were art and craft materials including paints, paper, playdough, blackboards, activity trays, stencils, and chalk.

Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters and educational materials including pictorial displays on the daily routine and the class rules. There were posters on numbers, shapes, colours, and happy birthday pots. There were displays of the children's artwork, posters on emotions, family photographs. There were photographs of the local primary schools within the community. There were also a display of flags from different countries.

(1)(b)

Rest / quiet area was provided in the playrooms in the form of child size seating, bean bags, and foam matting to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to. There were two sleep rooms with six cots in each room, for younger children's sleep provision. Stackable beds were also available for the older children should they require a rest.

(3)(a)

Outdoor area

- The outdoor play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate. The outdoor area was surrounded by fencing and gates. The area was covered with impact absorbing matting / surface, concrete paths, and tarmacadam.

Nursery, Creche and Snowdrops outdoor area

The children from the Creche and Snowdrop rooms had direct access from their rooms to the outdoor play area. These areas were equipped with a climbing frame with slides, wooden playhouses, a selection of bikes, tricycles rockers and tyres. There were sand trays with lids for messy play opportunities.

Mounted on the walls were sensorial boards with light switches, a door handle, xylophones, hook and eye locks and wall mounted jigsaws. There were wall mounted chalk boards with chalk.

Playschool, Preschool and Montessori outdoor area

There was a mud kitchen with pots and pans, chairs, benches, and picnic tables. There was a stage, tree trucks, tyres, and wooden pallets. There were planters with parsley, sage, mint, pebbles, and compost. There were covered tyres with pebbles and bark. There was a wooden boat. There were storage boxes with toys including balls, transport vehicles, buckets, rackets, animals, musical instruments, discs, blocks and stacking shapes. There was a sand unit with lid. There were tabletops and wooden pallets covered with artificial grass. There were wheelbarrows, crate boxes, inset see saws and rockers. There were mounted water pipes, mirrors, and ladybirds.

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 healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines. There was a three-week menu displayed on the notice board.
- The service had two designated chefs who prepared and cooked the meals and snacks. All meals and snacks for children attending on a full day-care basis were provided by the service.
- From 8.00hrs, the children had the opportunity for breakfast cereals with milk.
- At 10.30hrs, the children were provided with their morning snack provided from home which consisted of yogurts, a selection of sandwiches, crackers, cheese, rice cakes and wraps of various fillings, a selection of fruits including strawberries, blueberries, grapes, apples, oranges, and bananas.
- At 12:30hrs, the main meal of was offered. On Day 1 of the inspection, the main meal consisted of meatballs, potatoes, pasta, and gravy. On Day 2 of the inspection, the main meal consisted of chicken korma with vegetables, rice, and potatoes.
- At 15:00hrs, an afternoon an evening meal was offered. On Day 1 of the inspection, the children were provided with garlic baguettes with cheese and ham. On Day 2 of the inspection, the children were provided with spaghetti hoops and potatoes waffles.
- From 17:00hrs, on Day 1 of the inspection, a snack consisting of crackers and butter was offered and on Day 2 of the inspection, a selection of fruit pieces was offered to any child who was hungry.
- At each meal and snack the children had the opportunity for seconds and or an alternative. Older children could self-serve with the assistance of a staff member.
- The inspectors were advised that presently four children attending the service, have a milk bottle. The inspectors noted as per best practice that formula milk was made up at home and stored in a refrigerator until use.
- Cutlery, plates, and crockery were offered for children’s meal / snack times.
- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in each playroom and in the outdoor play areas.
- There was a fridge for the storage of perishable food items from children’s snacks in each playroom.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by fencing and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The door into the kitchen, staff toilets, storage areas and staff room had a system of security.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There were intact safety straps as per manufacturer's instructions, on the highchairs in the Nursery room.
- Blinds had fastener devices as a safety measure preventing any potential hazard access.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- On the days of inspection, the water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 32°C and 34.7°C.
- Documented risk assessments for the playrooms and outdoor play areas were available for review.
- Cleaning products were stored out of child reach within each of the playrooms and in designated utility areas.

Infection Control:

- Staff prompted and supervised the children to wash their hands before eating and following nappy changing / toileting, messy play, and outdoor play.
- Adequate liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary areas and the playroom wash hand basins.
- There were three designated nappy changing areas. The nappy mats were intact. The children's barrier creams were individually labelled. There was an airtight sealable foot operated lidded bin for the disposal of nappies in each of the nappy changing areas. Staff involved in the serving of food, wore disposal aprons when nappy changing.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

- A cleaning and disinfection schedule was available in the service. There were suitable cleaning products available in the service. The inspector noted high contact areas, were cleaned regularly, as per best practice guidance. The outdoor play equipment was cleaned prior to/ after a child's use, with documented records maintained.
- A sterilizer was available in the Nursery, Creche and Snowdrops rooms for the sterilizing of soothers. Each child's soother was labelled and readily identifiable.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in each of the playrooms.
- There were foot pedaled lidded bins in the sanitary areas and playrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff advised the inspectors that no child was presently on medication.
- Medications were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach. Medications examined were within date.
- The staff demonstrated to the inspectors their knowledge of best practice with regards to the safe storage, administration of and documentation requirement for any medication given in the premises.

Safe Sleep:

- There were two designated sleep rooms with six cots in each sleep room, for younger children's sleep provision. Ten stackable beds were available for older children requiring sleep if required. On the day of inspection, children were observed sleeping on demand.
- The sleep policy detailed the correct temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements.
- The inspectors observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes. The service kept documented sleep records. Records for sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child (as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy) and the signature of the staff member who checks the sleeping child.
- A digital probe thermometer was available in each of the sleep rooms and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature and therefore taking remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child.
- Age /tog appropriate sleeping bags and or cellular blankets that allow air to circulate were used for sleeping children under 2 years of age.

Outing:

- The service did not undertake outings. The service opted for visitors with expertise to share their knowledge and experience with the children. On Day 1 of the inspection, representatives from Guide Dogs Ireland with a guide dog visited the children in Playschool and Preschool rooms. The representatives advised how the guide dogs are working dogs, how they are trained, how they are named, their importance and when they can retire. The children had the option of petting the dog.

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. Thirty staff had current training in first aid for children.

(2)(a)

In each playroom there was a first aid box. The first aid boxes were safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position, with the content items in date. Additionally, there was a designated press in the office with first aid items.

(b)

The service demonstrated that the first aid press / boxes, were fully equipped 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)

A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated 13th of April 2023.

(b)

Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 19th of January 2023.

The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 3rd of February 2023.

(4)

Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's public liability insurance was for a full day care service, covering 106 children in this premises (the Hill) and 48 children in the other premises (main street), with an expiry date of 24th of January 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated, and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
- From a visual inspection the premises were of sound and stable structure.
- The service's exterior walls, roof and foundation appear to be structurally sound, weather-tight and water-tight to ensure protection from weather. Each interior floor, wall and ceiling appears to be well finished with no evidence of mould.
- Drainage and septic tanks were inaccessible to children.
- (b)
- Exits were clearly identified and visible during service hours.
- Electrical sockets were safe.
- Floor coverings were secured and non-slip.
- (c)
- There was natural lighting from the windows on the outer walls for each playroom and the sleep room.
- The playrooms were well ventilated by means of the openable windows and doors.
- The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.
- (d)
- The play and work equipment were clean and in good repair.
- Cleaning equipment was safely stored away from the children in a designated secured storage / utility areas and on high shelving.
- There was a cleaning schedule available for inspection.
- From observation, the furnished playrooms were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- (e)
- Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were provided.
- The pre-school service had a total of twelve designated children's toilets.

There were three nappy changing areas, each with a designated wash hand basin and an airtight sealable bin for the storage of disposal nappies.

There were five designated adult toilets with wash hand basins.

Liquid soap dispensers and paper hand towels in designated dispensers were within easy access to a pre-school child.

Foot pedal lidded bins were provided in the sanitary areas.