

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH044				
Name of Service:	Knockbridge Childcare				
Address of Service:	St. Marys Hall Community Centre, Knockbridge, Dundalk, Co. Louth				
Eircode:	A91 RWH2				
Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Scanlon				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	04/03/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>24</td> <td>PM</td> <td>-</td> </tr> </table>	AM	24	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan				
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader				
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	Not Applicable
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Description of service

This privately owned service commenced in 2002. It provides a sessional service to children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 9:00 – 12:30 and caters for a maximum of 30 children. The service partakes in the ECCE scheme Monday to Friday. This service is located in the local community hall in the rural area of Togher Co. Louth. There are 2 care rooms, sanitary accommodation, and an outdoor play area to the back of the hall.

Staffing

There are 4 staff including the registered provider who work directly with the children and 1 student in the service. An outside dance contractor also attends the service every 2 weeks.

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 an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 25 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliances which posed a risk were identified under Regulations 16, 23 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations referenced in this report.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*

(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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived and present throughout the inspection. The deputy who was the registered provider arrived and left during the inspection.

There were 4 staff members employed in the service including the registered provider and 1 student. All 5 files were reviewed plus 1 for an outside dance contractor was also reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all 4 members of staff in the service and the outside contractor.

There was 1 written reference for the student.

Two written references were available for 1 staff member.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for each of the 4 staff members, the student and the outside contractor all of which were dated within the last 3 years.

(d) Following a review of the staff files presented for inspection documentary evidence indicated that international police vetting was not required as none of the staff members, the student or outside contractor had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the childcare qualification for all 4 members of staff in the service. A qualification was not required for the student or outside contractor.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) The one written reference for the student was not validated.

The student did not have a second written and validated reference. It is acknowledged a reference was submitted on the 5/3/24 via email dated the 5/3/24 the day after the inspection. This also required validation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The two outstanding references are attached

All staff will have 2 written and validated references on file prior to commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two written and validated references were submitted.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate has reviewed the response and the non-compliance has been addressed following additional information via telephone conversation with the registered provider on 1/7/24.

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) There were an adequate number of adults present with the preschool children attending the service when the inspector arrived at the service and for the duration of the inspection.

(3) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

Preschool Room 1:

There were 16 preschool children (aged 3 - 5 years) attending this room with 2 staff members and 1 student.

The child adult ratios were correct.

Preschool Room 2:

There were 8 preschool children (aged 2 - 5 years) attending this room with 1 staff member.

The child adult ratios were correct.

The registered provider was a floater for the service and came to the service on a number of times throughout the 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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis

Non-Compliance Information

(i) There was no weekly staff roster to show the staff rostered to work in each room and the hours they should work. This is a recurrent non-compliance.

It is acknowledged that the staff recorded their entrance and exit times daily.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A roster is now in place and will be copied and filled out daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of a weekly rota submitted.

Summary Comment

Based on the response given by the registered provider, the non-compliance has been addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child,

Compliance Information

Basic care Needs:

- The personal care provided met the needs of the children attending the service. Independence was promoted for the children who were all toilet trained.
- Attention was paid to the children's appearance e.g. noses were cleaned.
- Children's drink bottles were freely available in a basket / tub for each room.
- Morning lunches were provided by the parents.
- The children in the service had a change of environment to the large hall to practice for their graduation and it was reported by the person in charge that normally they would have gone outside during this time.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms and transitions between activities were organised and swift.
- A key worker system was in operation in the service and weekly communication between the service and home was conducted via weekly notebook of activities. Informal communication also occurred at drop off and collection. A monthly newsletter was also used to inform parents of all activities for the month that the children had partaken in and this was displayed for the parents.

Physical and Material Environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service.
- A variety of age-appropriate materials and equipment were available in the care rooms that support many areas of development such as fine motor skills, speech and language and sensory development.
- Toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving in the rooms which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the older children in accessing toys.

Programme Of Activities

- Artwork was on display throughout the service with toothbrush painting, "all about me", flower art and free painting.
- The weekly/monthly themes were on display on the curriculum board. Folders with observations, pieces of artwork and photographs were available for the children in both rooms to be sent home at the end of the year.

Non-Compliance Information

The soft cosy areas in each room were inadequate to facilitate a child to relax in or take a break from an activity. The area in Preschool Room 2 consisted of a small area of industrial type carpet in a corner and in Preschool Room 1 it consisted of 3 cushions in a corner on the linoleum flooring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Room 1 laid soft cosy flooring with cushions and cosy blanket.

Room 2 Did the same and added cushions. These new cosy areas will remain there in the rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers response, the non-compliance in Regulation 19 has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The water temperature in the tap in the staff toilet was recorded at 75.3° C, which exceeded the safe water temperature of 43° C and was a burns risk.
2. There were a number of sharp unprotected corners, on one of the tables in Preschool Room 1 and the white tables and grey play surfaces in Preschool Room 2. These are an injury hazard.

Infection Control:

3. Cleaning procedures were found to be inappropriate and at variance with the services cleaning policy. Staff reported that toys were being cleaned with a disinfectant and hot water and the surfaces in Room 1 were being cleaned with disinfectant only.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Thermostat to control water temperature was put on staff toilet hot water taps.
2. Protective corner covers have been put on tables Protective corners covers will remain on table and corner areas.

Infection Control:

3. Toys and surfaces will be cleaned with hot soapy water and then disinfected as needed.

These are added to daily list/ checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The responses from the registered provider are accepted and the non-compliances have been addressed following a telephone conversation with the registered provider who provided an additional response on 1/7/24. These will be for review at the next inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that there was a person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) at all times in the service.

(2)(a) and (b) There was a first aid box for the children in the service available at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) and (b) There were no eye pads in the first aid boxes.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

First Aid box restocked with eye pads and will be restocked with requested eye pads when needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance in Regulation 25 has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance cover was available for up to 30 children and expires 27/03/2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

1. Throughout the inspection the room temperatures in the service were not within the recommended comfortable range of 18–22 °C. The following temperatures were recorded;

- Preschool Room 1: 15.6 °C
- Preschool Room 2: 14.8 -16 °C
- Sanitary Accommodation outside Preschool 2: 15.3 °C

- Children's sanitary accommodation in the hall: 15.9 °C
- Staff toilet: 14.4 °C

2. Ventilation appeared inadequate in Preschool Room 1 as there was a strong lingering odour of disinfectant throughout the inspection which had been used earlier in the morning to clean the surfaces. In addition, there was no evidence of windows being opened to allow ventilation in this room throughout the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service has installed wall thermostats in each room and wall thermostats will be monitored by staff to check the daily temperatures.
2. Window will be opened slightly daily.

These are added to daily list/check.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted of new thermometers.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified in Regulation 29 have been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.