

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS048
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Name of Service:	KIDDIECARE
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Address of Service:	Rosenallis Community Centre, Rosenallis, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 VK64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Bowes
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	17 February 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain
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.

Description of service

KIDDIECARE is a sessional privately operated preschool service located in a community centre in Rosenallis , Co Laois. The service is open between 9.30am and 12.30pm during the school term. The service has the sole use of the rooms in use which include an entrance lobby area, a playroom and sanitary accommodation directly off the room for use by preschool children. The service also has the use of the large community hall in the building. Sanitary accommodation is available to staff off the hall. An enclosed outdoor play area for the sole use of the service is located at the side of the building. Parking is available at the front of the building which is located adjacent to the local primary school.

Staffing

The service is staffed by two adults. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and is available to provide relief cover as required. The registered provider arrived during the course of the inspection.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11- Staffing Levels,

Regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

Regulation 25- First Aid,

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures,

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

The scope of the inspection included the playroom, hall and outdoor play area. The inspector observed the playroom and hall being used on the day of inspection.

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, the person in charge, the staff member and the 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service had both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was also present during the inspection.

(c)

It was observed on inspection that both staff members had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to both caring for and meeting the needs of the children present.

(2)(a)(b) Two references from past employers and four references from sources other than past employers were held on file in respect of the three staff members present on the day of the inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were held on file in respect of the three staff members present. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police clearance was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for more than six consecutive months as adults.

(3)

Records available confirmed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were conducted prior to the appointment of staff working in the service.

(4)

All staff in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education varying from level 5 to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

The registered provider furnished records to confirm that the staff in the service had received, read and understood the policies and any updates to the policies following reviews. A hard copy of the service policies and procedures was held in the service for staff and parents' reference.

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)

The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance in the service. Two adults cared for a total of 12 children on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was also in attendance to assist in the service and to facilitate the inspection.

(3)

A review of the staff roster and the childrens attendance records confirmed that two staff members were in attendance in the service at all times with a maximum of 12 children in daily attendance.

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

(1)(a)

Basis Needs:

- Staff were observed to assist children with hand washing after messy play, after going to the toilet and before lunchtime in the service. Hop-ups were provided at wash hand basins to assist children independently wash their hands under supervision. Liquid soap and disposable paper towels were located within easy reach of the children in the toilet areas.
- Children had free access to the rest area in the playroom. A low level soft couch, a soft floor mat, soft toys and books on open shelves in the rest area ensured that individual children could take a break from activities, relax and rest as needed.
- Snacks provided by parents and guardians of children for break included sandwiches, crackers, rolls, yoghurts and fresh fruit including oranges. Children had free access to a container of water and beakers were provided for children to take drinks throughout the day. Staff sat with the children at break time and engaged the children in easy conversation while having and finishing their snacks at their own pace.
- Staff were observed to encourage and help children as necessary to place their lunch boxes in individual bags hanging in the lobby area of the playroom and to remove plates from the tables after break time.

Physical and Material Environment

- Low level tables and chairs were located in a section of the room that was separated from both the rest areas and an open area for floor play.
- Low-level open shelves stocked with toys and play equipment allowed children to easily access toys and play materials of their choice.
- Toys and play equipment available to support play and development included jigsaws, games, puzzles, miniature animals and toys on wheels. Equipment and materials were located close to the low level tables and chairs for children to sit and play. Children were observed to enjoy colouring, painting and writing on

the whiteboard in the playroom. Additional arts and crafts materials available included stickers, rulers, pencils, scissors and collage materials. Children were also observed to enjoy playing with blocks and bricks of different sizes and dimensions and with a toy garage during floor play. Toys included straws, threading and beading materials, timers and a variety of manipulative build and stick together toys were provided.

- The home corner area in the service supported imaginary play. The kitchen was stocked with stainless steel pots, a kitchen teapot, cups, cutlery, food box containers and a small sink to add to the home from home setting. Dressing up clothes, a self-care area with a mirror and hair brushes were also provided. Children were observed to engage in imaginative and messy play in a group setting using a tray filled with flour, small animals and vehicles on wheels.
- The outdoor area was safely fenced in with a heavy duty wire fencing. Natural materials provided included rubber tyres, a timber mud kitchen, a miniature bridge and a tunnel to climb through. A willow dome was growing and offered a maze for children to play in outdoors. Sow and grow boxes were provided for children to grow herbs, flowers and vegetables in spring time. Timber seating was provided for children to sit outdoors. A wooden house with an open roofed section and an enclosed room area offered a sheltered space for children to play outdoors during inclement weather conditions.

Supporting Relationships:

- A calm and relaxed atmosphere prevailed in the service during the course of the inspection. Staff were observed to both encourage and assist children to play with toys and play equipment of their own choice both collectively in small groups and individually as sought by children.
- Break time was used in the service to listen to the children, encourage children to engage in conversation and answer their questions.
- Staff were observed to take cues from the children when having snack time with them. For example, when a child indicated the loss of a tooth, the opportunity was taken to discuss brushing teeth, going to the dentist and the dentist's soft chair. Children were called by their names and listened to as they told their stories about names they liked, what happened at home and what they enjoyed doing at home and in the service.
- Upcoming festive days including "pancake Tuesday" and "St. Patrick's day" were introduced to the children by the staff with a view to programme planning for these events in line with the children's expressed requests. Staff displayed an encouraging tone and acted on the children's request to play in the hall after break time and before home time.

- Staff were observed to gently encourage and praise children for sharing and taking turns with toys when sitting in the rest area.
- The walls in the playroom depicted the children's interests and how relationships were supported. Examples to illustrate how this was fostered in the service, observed by the inspector included “helping handprints” pictures of the children engaged in indoor and outdoor activities, family trees and the birthday wall.
- The inspector was furnished with the electronic application used by the service to communicate a monthly newsletter to parents on upcoming events and information on the service and to allow individual parents to view a profile of their child in the service.
- The service availed of “feedback forms” for example, to allow parents to comment on the staff, the classroom, the garden, any concerns, any changes recommended and compliments about 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)

A staff member present in the service had up to date FAR training with an expiry date of the 15 October 2025. A relief staff member was available to the service with FAR training and an expiry date of the 23 January 2026.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box was held in storage in the entrance lobby and in an area accessible to staff and inaccessible to children in attendance at the 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)(b)

A record was maintained of fire drills as conducted in the service. Records confirmed that the last monthly fire drill was conducted on 10 February 2025. The maintenance record for fire extinguishers located at the entrance door to the service confirmed that an annual service was conducted on 5 April 2024. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that the last service was conducted 11 December 2024.

(4)

A child friendly notice of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire with picture illustrations was on display in the playroom. A fire assembly point was posted on the stone wall in the carpark at the front of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 22 children in daily attendance in a sessional service. Insurance was valid from the 10 September 2024 to the 27 March 2025.