

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH066
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Name of Service:	Gullivers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Unit 3/4 French's Lane, Trim, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 RX38
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Brophy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM. Cunningham & D. Murray
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

Gulliver's Childcare is located within an urban area. This privately owned service was established in 2012 and provides full day care, part day care and sessional childcare and education to children aged from 2 to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) and operates from 7.30am-6.30pm. The service is located in a purpose-built premises alongside other business units within the town setting. There is one care room downstairs and four care rooms upstairs. Other facilities include a kitchen on the ground floor level nappy changing and sanitary facilities. The outdoor space is located on the rooftop.

Staffing

The service employs 8 staff members who provide direct care to children, which includes the manager and assistant manager, and also one administration staff. The registered provider does not work directly with the children; however, he is in regular contact with staff and available to them when required. Of this staff complement, 8 staff members have completed at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications at level 5 (NFQ).

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.

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 manager, 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

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) (a)(b) Eighteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 9 staff within the required timeframe of every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting was available for the two staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the access and inclusion model.

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) (1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on arrival of the inspectors. There were five care rooms in operation.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed,

- The **Fantastic Frogs** room had 5 children ranging in age from 2 years 10 months to 3 years 6 months being cared for by 1 adult.
- The **Terrific Turtles** room had 9 children ranging in age from 2 years 10 months to 3 years 6 months being cared for by 1 staff.
- The **Busy Bees** room had 8 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months age being cared for by 2 staff.
- The **Wise Owls** room had 9 children ranging in age from 3 years to 4 years being care for by 1 staff.

- The **Rainbow** room had 16 children ranging in age from 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff, one of whom was providing AIM support.

(8) (a) According to the staff roster presented to the Early Years Inspectors the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of the Children:

- The adults supported the children to manage their personal care; they placed bibs on the younger children to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet when eating; they supported older children to use the toilet independently.
- Meals, snacks, and drinks were prepared in the service and provided at regular intervals. Adults sat with the children when they were eating and provided help when needed. A drinks station was provided in each room.
- Children were comforted when they became upset, with adult's holding them, speaking to them softly and responding to their needs.
- Staff supported children's learning with activities that were observed to be fun and creative. There were a variety of themes in the different care rooms such as "Autumn", "Sensory week" and "Fire drills" with activities and children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying energetic outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

- The registered provider ensured that suitable care practices were in place. The adult's demonstrated knowledge of the individual children in their care including their likes, dislikes and how they care for children with additional needs.
- Children were comforted when they became upset with adult's holding them, speaking to them softly and responding to their needs.
- The staff used an app to communicate in real time with parents/guardians in relation to the individual children's care. This included information relating to diet, sleep, care provided and daily activities.

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-

(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, or

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Cosy areas consisting of soft seating/mats were available if a child needed to take a break from activities and rest. Children were accommodated to sleep on stackable beds in the Busy Bees room, if required.

(3)(a) The outdoor space was enclosed with walls and had a secure gate. The surface area consisted of artificial grass.

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

The four pre-school rooms were bright with artwork displayed. Low level shelving was available to facilitate children to select and replace items of interest. Each room was resourced with age-appropriate play and learning materials. Furniture was child sized and enabled the children to sit comfortably for meals and tabletop activities. Equipment in the outdoor space included a plastic playhouse, hula hoops, building blocks and shapes, sand/water table and a balancing plank. Additional equipment is brought out as required.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a weekly menu plan with a selection of meals ranging from meat, fish and poultry sourced from an external catering company and heated up in the service. For the children attending the service on a full day care basis morning snack was at 11am taken in from home by the children, consisting of yogurts, fruits, sandwiches. At 12.45-1.00pm snack served was custard and fruit salad. The main meal of the day was served at 3.00pm which was pasta with chicken and corn. A wrap and fruit was served at 16:30pm before the children left for home. Water and milk were the drinks of choice with individual bottles/cups for the children in the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance door to the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock and keypad entry; this was controlled by staff to prevent the pre-school children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- During conversations with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces.
- The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

- Each staff member was responsible for their daily pre-school room cleaning such as tabletops and sweeping the floors and cleaning schedules were completed by the staff daily. A cleaning company attended to larger cleaning duties in the evenings.
- Children's hands were routinely washed before eating, following toilet use, outdoor and messy play. There was a supply of liquid hand soap and paper towel at the sinks to support hygienic hand washing and foot pedal operated bins were available for the hygienic disposal of used paper hand towel, tissues and soiled nappies.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and in conversation with staff members, they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

- Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed

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) Persons trained in first aid response (FAR) were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in each pre-school room in the service and immediately available for the children at all times

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 fire drills which were completed monthly in the service.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced in July 2024 and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced 19th April 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid from 30/08/2024 to 29/08/2025. The insurance provided cover for 137 children.