

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH077
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Tigers Childcare
-------------------------	------------------

Address of Service:	Castle Martin, Eastham Rd, Bettystown, Co. Meath
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	A92 DX70
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Providers:	Susan Clince, Therese Noonan
--------------------------------------	------------------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Dates of Inspection:	10/09/2024
	13/09/2024

No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	100	PM	66
	AM	94		
Day 2				

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S Taaffe and AM Coyle
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Tigers Childcare is one of 19 early years services and 3 separate stand-alone school aged childcare services operated by the registered providers, all of which are located in Dublin, Meath, Kildare and Cork. This service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday for 51 weeks each year, closing for 1 week over Christmas. The service accommodates children on a full day care, part time and sessional basis, catering for a maximum of 140 pre-school children from 12 months to 6 years of age and school aged children up to 12 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00midday and from 9.30am to 12.30pm for 38 weeks each year. The service is conducted from a purpose-built 2-storey premises located in a residential setting in the coastal village of Bettystown in Co Meath. A total of seven care rooms are provided in the service, with the Junior Discoverers Room, the Senior Discoverers Room and the Explorers Room located on the ground floor, while the Junior Active Cubs Room, the Active Cubs Room, ECCE Room 1 and ECCE Room 2 are located on the first floor. Four separate sleep rooms are provided, two adjoining the Junior Discoverers Room and two adjoining the Senior Discoverers Room. Ancillary accommodation includes an office which adjoins the main reception area and a kitchen on the ground floor, with a meeting room and a staff room provided on the first floor. A spacious fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 31 staff members employed in this service, of whom 3 are on statutory leave.

The staff team consists of the service manager, the deputy manager and a further 24 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children, 2 staff members who work with school aged children only, a chef and 2 cleaners.

The company's Quality Development Manager was present in the service on both days of inspection. The registered providers do not work directly with the children in the service and are not based in this service.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28 and 31. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16(1)(j)(k) – record in relation to pre-school service.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was carried out following receipt of a notification of incident submission from the registered providers to the Inspectorate.

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers on the first day of inspection in relation to excessively hot water at wash hand basins accessed by pre-school children in attendance. Within 24 hours the registered providers provided written assurances that the risk for children had been appropriately addressed. The inspectors confirmed that the water temperatures did not exceed the safe maximum reading of 43°C on the second day of inspection.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children and the company's Quality Development Manager 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
- (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.
- (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 manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person appointed to deputise as required.
- (b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.00am on the first day of inspection and when they arrived announced at 8.30am on the second day of inspection. The service manager was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

All staff files were reviewed, 32 in total. These consisted of 31 files maintained in respect of all staff members employed in this service and the file maintained for the company's Quality Development Manager who was present in the service on both days of inspection.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for 31 of the 32 staff members whose files were reviewed. In respect of 1 staff member, one written, validated reference was available in addition to one statement of employment. Please see the non-compliance section below in relation to this statement of employment.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 12 of the 14 staff members who had lived outside the State for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) The company's Quality Development Manager and all 26 staff members employed to care for pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7)(a) It was evident in the induction records maintained by the service that the registered providers had ensured that all staff members were provided with relevant information and training when commencing employment in the service. Using the company's e-learning platform, staff members completed a range of online courses during the induction process in relation to the care and safety of children. Course topics included caring for children, food and nutrition, health and safety including the safety of children, child protection, the service's policies and procedures, and use of the service's software application.

Staff members informed the inspectors that staff meetings took place outside of service hours every 3 months. Written records were provided for inspection in relation to staff meetings held in the service, including records of a staff meeting which took place on 05/09/2024 where practice issues including the requirement to ensure that all children were appropriately supervised at all times, and associated policies and procedures were included as agenda items.

Staff supervision records were maintained on the premises. The records indicated and the service manager confirmed that 1 to 1 staff support, and supervision sessions were provided for new employees on a weekly basis for the first 4 weeks and then at least every 2 months thereafter for all staff.

In addition to these formal staff support and supervision sessions where care practices, play environments, challenges and professional development were addressed, the inspectors were informed that mentoring and support was provided to all staff members by the service manager, deputy manager and room leaders on an on-going basis.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b) The statement of employment document presented for inspection as a reference for one staff member contained no details apart from the staff member's name and dates of employment within an organisation but did not outline any personal attributes or information regarding the staff member's suitability for employment. The written validation record, maintained in respect of this statement of employment, also confirmed that the previous employer had provided no further supporting information verbally, when contacted for validation purposes, in order to provide this service with assurances that the staff member was appropriate for employment. This was not considered an acceptable reference.

(d) International police vetting was not available for 2 staff members in respect of 3 jurisdictions they had resided in outside the State for more than 6 consecutive months as adults. It is acknowledged that applications for international police vetting in respect of these staff had been submitted for all 3 jurisdictions.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(2)(a)(b) The staff member is currently on maternity leave. Prior to her return to work, manager will secure a third written reference and validation confirming appropriateness for employment.

(d) These staff members were recruited prior to Tigers Childcare acquiring this service. One colleague has, since day of inspection left the service and is no longer employed by Tigers Childcare. The other colleague is on long term sick leave and Tigers Childcare will secure international police vetting from the relevant jurisdictions prior to their return to work.

Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) The registered provider is currently reviewing the company's Recruitment and Vetting Policy to state that if sufficient assurances as to the suitability of a candidate for employment is not provided within the reference or validation exercise, that a further reference will be obtained before hiring the candidate.

In the ECEC sector, it has become more common that previous employers give a 'statement of employment' as a written reference and when a reference check is completed, they provide the basic details only - to include the dates the colleague worked, the position held and reason they left.

(d) Manager has updated their procedures on acquisitions to conduct an audit of all staff files to ensure the staff files are fully compliant or action is taken to bring to compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Recruitment and Vetting Policy
- Reference check forms
- Acquisition checklist

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and documentary evidence submitted by the registered providers after the inspection. Assurances given by the registered providers that the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(d) will be rectified on these staff members' return to work after statutory leave have been accepted by the Inspectorate. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered providers ensured that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were in place for the service. These were available on the company's website and in electronic format on the premises. Relevant policies were emailed to parents in conjunction with the service's parents handbook.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the days of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced on the first day of inspection and announced on the second day of inspection and remained correct throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the highest numbers of children were present in each care room during the inspection:

- In the Junior Discoverers Room there was a maximum of 9 children aged 1 year 1 month to 1 year 4 months present at any one time (with a total of 12 different children present at separate times during the day), being cared for by 3 staff members. On both days of inspection a number of the 12 children were attending this room for periods of between 1 and 3 hours as part of the settling-in process, some with their parents present to support the children's transition from home to the service.

- In the Senior Discoverers Room there were 10 children aged 1 year 3 months to 1 year 11 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Explorers Room there were 14 children aged 2 years 1 month to 2 years 11 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Junior Active Cubs Room there were 21 children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years 8 months being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the Active Cubs Room there were 16 children aged 3 years 9 months to 4 years 7 months, of whom 1 child was attending on a sessional basis, being cared for by 3 staff members, one of whom was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme to reduce the adult to child ratio.
- In ECCE Room 1 there were 12 children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years 6 months, all attending on a sessional basis, being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In ECCE Room 2 there were 18 children aged 2 years 10 months to 3 years 4 months, all attending on a sessional basis, being cared for by 3 staff members, of whom one was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model scheme to reduce the adult to child ratio.
- School aged children only are accommodated in ECCE Room 1 and ECCE Room 2 each afternoon.

The service manager, a number of staff members and the company's Quality Development Manager provided relief and support to the care rooms at mealtimes, and for nappy changing and break cover during the inspection.

(8)(a) Based upon a review of the service's staff roster and staff sign in records it was evident that the registered providers ensured that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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:

- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(g) A record in writing was maintained of required policies and procedures in accordance with Regulation 10. Staff members adhered to policies including the service’s accidents, incidents or injuries policy and the service’s risk management policy. This was evidenced in the actions undertaken following an incident which occurred on 28/08/2024 whereby a child left a care room and spent 4 minutes unaccompanied and unsupervised on the adjoining corridor within the premises. The service had promptly conducted a detailed risk assessment which identified risks and outlined the control measures to be implemented in order to reduce the likelihood of a recurrence of a similar incident. This was in keeping with the service’s risk management policy which contained the statement ‘Risk assessments are not static and should be amended and/or created depending on the context of the service and incidents that occur.’ Furthermore, in keeping with the service’s accidents, incidents or injuries policy, the service submitted a Notification of Incident form to the Inspectorate regarding this incident within the required timeframe, as detailed as compliance information in Regulation 31 of this inspection report.

(h) Details of children’s daily attendance including arrival and departure times were recorded digitally on a childcare software application in each care room.

(i) An up-to-date weekly staff roster was available and individual staff attendance records including arrival, departure and break times were maintained on a digital system in the service on a daily basis.

(j) There was evidence of appropriate record keeping in relation to administration of medication including signed parental consent. The inspectors sampled 10 of these records which were recorded electronically using a specific childcare software application.

The records showed that the medication had been appropriately checked and the procedure undertaken by two staff members with the record then shared with parents in electronic format when the medication had been administered. The records provided details of when the administration of medication record was received, viewed and signed by a parent.

(k) A record was maintained of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children during their attendance in the service, as evidenced in the 11 records sampled by the inspectors. These records were recorded electronically using a specific childcare software application and then shared with parents in electronic format on the day the record was compiled. The records provided details of the date and time when each accident or incident record was received, viewed and signed by a parent.

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) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

- There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and healthy meals and snacks were provided for the children by the onsite chef at regular intervals throughout the day. Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasant unhurried experience with children given plenty of time to enjoy their meals. Staff members were observed sitting with the children engaging them in conversation whilst encouraging them to eat. The staff members in both the Junior Discoverers Room and the Senior Discoverers Rooms sat in front of the children who required assistance with eating warmly engaging with the children at their eye level. Throughout the care rooms the children's water bottles were accessible to them on low level shelving for them to take as desired throughout the day.
- Nappy changing was carried out at scheduled times and more frequently as needed, staff members used the opportunity to chat and sing to the children during the procedure. The children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the toilet independently with discreet support and supervision provided as required.

The children were gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards. Children's personal care needs were attended to promptly with protective bibs were placed on younger children prior to eating and their hands and faces were cleaned afterwards.

- Staff members in the Junior Discoverers Room confirmed that the children's sleep time was child-led with each child's need for sleep met according to their home routine with children placed to sleep in cots in the sleep room adjacent to the care room as needed. The children attending the Senior Discoverers Room were placed to sleep in either of the 2 cot rooms adjoining the care room after the children had their dinner. The staff members in the care room confirmed that the children could sleep at other times should they require it. The children aged over 2 years attending the Explorers Room and the Junior Active Cubs Room slept on sleep mats set up on the floor of the care rooms after dinner.
- Age-appropriate positive language and practices were observed being used by staff when supporting children's social behaviours or supporting resolution of minor conflicts.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Throughout the service staff members were observed to be warm, caring and sensitive in their interactions with children, in turn the children appeared to be comfortable and familiar with their caregivers and within their environment. The children sought staff out for comfort or support as they required it.
- On the days of inspection children were settling into the service including younger children settling into the Junior Discoverers Room. The children were observed to be well supported and were held, cuddled and comforted to good effect. The service facilitates and encourages parents to remain with their children who are commencing attendance at the service for as long as they chose, to support the children to settle into the service.
- Throughout the care rooms the staff members were observed to work well together as a team, the staff members supported each other in the care of the children, modelling positive ways of interacting with the children and one another.
- The staff members were observed to take the opportunity to provide feedback to parents and guardians on the children's day in the service when children were collected, with parents welcomed in to the service and the children's care rooms at drop-off and collection. The service uses a software application to record the children's feeding, nappy changes, general wellbeing, activities and sleep which parents can access in real time as they chose.

Physical and material environment:

- There was age-appropriate furniture in each of the care rooms such as correct sized tables, chairs and highchairs. The play materials were stored or displayed on low level shelving units.
- The care rooms were resourced with a variety of play-based materials and equipment and were organised by identifiable interest areas such as home corners, construction areas, small world play, tabletop activity areas, sensory play materials and reading/cosy areas. The children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with.
- A spacious fully enclosed outdoor area was located to the rear of the service accessed directly from the Senior Discoverers Room, the Explorers Room and the corridor on the ground floor. A canopied area was in place covered with transparent rigid plastic corrugated sheeting across 2 boundary walls which enabled the children to access this section of the outdoor area regardless of the weather. A fully enclosed safety-surfaced central outdoor area contained a climbing frame with a slide along with 3 fixed spring sit-on rocking toys. The outer area surrounding the central area was surfaced with concrete and a resourced play kitchen along with a range of ride on toys were available for the children. This area provided the children with the opportunity for running and free movement. An enclosed grass area with a well-resourced kitchen in addition to large tyres was also provided.

Non-Compliance Information

Physical and material environment:

1. The taps were stiff and hard to operate without firm and sustained pressure at the wash hand basins in the children's sanitary accommodation adjoining ECCE Room 1, the Active Cubs Room and the Junior Active Cubs Room. Consequently, children who were ordinarily able to wash their hands unaided needed the assistance of a staff member to turn the taps on which did not promote independence or support the children to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills, particularly after using the toilet.
2. The dress up materials in the Senior Discoverers Room were packed tightly in a box and were therefore not easily accessible to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

Physical and material environment:

1. Taps in the above-named rooms have been replaced with taps that the handles twist left to right to turn on and off to ensure the children can independently turn the taps on and off.
2. The dress up materials have been moved from the box in the tall shelf and have been relocated to a shelf at the children's level, where the dress up materials are accessible to the children and the children are able see what dress up materials are available to them.

Preventive Action

Physical and material environment:

1. Taps have been changed to a more accessible tap which the children can operate independently. Colleagues have been briefed to inform management if children are struggling to operate taps in the future. This item is included on the agenda of the next centre meeting.
2. Manager explained to the colleagues in the room the importance of always having the materials open and easily available to the children. This item is on the agenda for the next centre meeting. Management will regularly monitor environments and how children are engaged in their environment.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photograph of replaced taps.
- Photograph of dress up shelf and dress up area.
- Support and supervision record, supervision.
- Centre team meeting agenda.

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers after the inspection. The registered providers demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) have been adequately addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The sleep rooms which adjoined the Junior Discoverers Room contained a total of 11 standard cots and the sleep rooms which adjoined the Senior Discoverers Room contained a total of 12 standard cots, ensuring that all children aged less than 2 years had access to a standard cot on a daily basis. A sufficient number of sleep mats were available in the service for children aged 2 years and older. Apart from the non-compliance detailed below, the rest areas provided in the care rooms were suitably equipped with mats, cushions and soft seating to facilitate children to relax and rest comfortably if they wished to do so during the day.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) The rest area in the Senior Discoverers Room was insufficiently resourced should a child wish to rest, relax or take a break from activities during the day. The rest area available on the days of inspection comprised of a lightweight duvet with 4 cushions provided.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

(1)(b)

1. The location of the cosy area within the Senior Discoverers Room has been moved to a more open and spacious area to allow for a bigger rest space for the children. More pillows, blankets and soft toys have been added to the area. A large mat has also been added to the area.

Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1. The educators in the room have completed the Aistear/Siolta practice guide self-evaluation tool on environments regularly so that the environment is changing alongside the needs of the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photograph of cosy area.
- Copy of Aistear/Siolta self-evaluation tool.

Summary Comment

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers after the inspection. The registered providers demonstrated that the non-compliance identified under Regulation 20(1)(b) has been adequately 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.

Compliance Information

The following are examples of the measures undertaken by the registered providers and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children attending the service:

General Safety:

- The entrance doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The front entrance door from the lobby of the premises is accessed via a keypad with the code changed each week and shared with parents and staff.
- In addition to the standard door, a half-door was in place at the entrance to a care room in the service, to reduce the likelihood of a child who had a tendency to seek to leave the care room from departing the room unaccompanied. Furthermore, in response to a recently completed risk assessment conducted in the service, a child-proof safety latch had been fitted on the outer side of this half-door as a further safety measure, in advance of the second day of inspection.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The service implemented effective soother management procedures, with all individually labelled soothers stored in personalised containers when not in use. Staff members described appropriate management of mouthed toys and soothers including the requirement to wash these items in soapy water after use and the daily preparation and use of the sterilising equipment provided in the service.

- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating and following outdoor and messy play. Children who were toilet trained were gently reminded, and assisted, when necessary, to wash their hands after using the toilet.
- The services nappy changing policy was observed to be implemented when staff members changed children's nappies.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition and documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. The services administration of medication policy was observed to be followed when a child in the Junior Active Cubs Room was administered medication on the first day of inspection.
- Detailed care plans and medication protocols were in place for a number of children in attendance who had specific allergies.

Safe Sleep:

- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern were being performed and documented on all sleeping children.
- On the day of inspection all children aged less than 2 years slept in standard cots provided in the service's sleep rooms.
- Adequate space of at least 50cm was maintained between the cots and sleep mats in the sleep rooms and care rooms in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The hot water supply provided at the 2 wash hand basins in the sanitary area adjacent to the Senior Discoverers Room and at the wash hand basin adjacent to the nappy changing mat in the sanitary area beside the Explorers Room exceeded the maximum safe water temperature of 43°C as detailed in table 1.1 below. When identified, the inspectors informed the staff members in the care rooms and the Quality Development Manager who was present in the service of this scalding risk and safety notices were placed beside the taps advising staff not to use them. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers in relation to the water temperatures.

Location	Water temperature	Time recorded
Tap on right hand side of sanitary area Senior Discoverers room.	51.5°C	10:45am
	55°C	12:30pm
Tap left hand side of sanitary area Senior Discoverers room	53.5°C	10:45am
	54.5°C	12:30pm
Tap in sanitary area Explorers room	51.5°C	12:25pm
	56.3°C	3pm

Table 1.1 Water temperature readings recorded on the day of inspection.

Administration of Medication:

- Two auto-injector adrenaline pens provided for a named child in the service were out of date, having expired in February 2024. This posed a risk that these products may not be sufficiently potent if required in the event that the child developed anaphylaxis in the service. It is acknowledged that the child was not present in the service on either day of inspection. However, the attendance records confirmed that the child was present on 7 days between 28/08/2024 and 05/09/2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers stated the following corrective actions and preventive actions have been undertaken:

Corrective Action

General Safety:

- Water temperature regulator was fitted to each tap to control the temperature so that the temperature of the water in the wash hand basins does not exceed 43oC.

Administration of Medication:

- The parents replaced the out-of-date auto-injector adrenaline pens. The child was excluded from the service until a new adrenaline pen was provided by the child's parents.

Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Regular temperature checks are carried out on all wash hand basins that children use, to ensure the thermostat control are in working order.

Administration of Medication:

2. Staff have been briefed on their medication policy, emphasising that it is their responsibility to check the expiry date of all medication when it is brought into the centre. Manager is making note of the expiry dates of medication stored long term in the centre and displayed this in the room so staff can clearly see when the medication needs to be replaced, and they have adequate time to ask parents to replace the medication before the expiry date is reached. This item is included on the agenda for the next centre meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photograph of temperature logs.
- Photographs of auto-injector adrenaline pens and child's attendance log.
- A record of emergency medications and their expiry dates listed for named children in the service.
- Team meeting agenda

Summary Comment

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers on the first day of inspection for excessively hot water in taps accessed by pre-school children during the inspection. Within 24 hours, documentary evidence was submitted to the Inspectorate confirming that the warm water supply had been thermostatically controlled not to exceed the safe water temperature of 43°C.

The inspectors reviewed the corrective actions and evidence submitted by the registered providers after the inspection. The registered providers demonstrated that the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

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

(iii) an employee, or

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

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

Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present in electronic tablet devices provided in each care room, noting each child's arrival and departure time on a daily basis.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival to the service on the days of inspection the inspectors were requested to record their attendance on the premises and the purpose of their visit.

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) Four staff members held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training. Based on a review of the staff members' training records and the service's staff roster, it was evident that the registered providers ensured that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 27/08/2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 20/11/2023 and the smoke detection system on 17/06/2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the care rooms and communal spaces in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the days of the inspection the inspectors observed the staff members appropriately supervising the children both indoors and outdoors and also when the children were moving between spaces. The staff members described the necessity of providing close supervision to all children, particularly at times when the room doors were required to be open, such as when children were arriving to and being collected from the service. Staff members informed the inspectors that they placed an additional focus on supervising a child who tended to seek to leave the care room should such an opportunity arise. In discussion with the inspectors, the staff members referenced safe practice consistent with the service’s supervision of children policy which includes the statement that ‘all children are always within the sight or hearing of at least one educator/practitioner at all times’. Staff members described the necessity to count the children on a regular basis throughout the day, particularly but not limited to before, during and after transitions from one part of the service to another, including when accessing the outdoor play area. This method of counting children regularly was observed in practice during the inspection and supported staff members to accurately account for the number of children present under the daily supervision routines. When outdoors, the staff members positioned themselves to ensure the children were in a staff member’s line of vision at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered providers ensured that insurance cover was in place for up to 140 children attending the full day care service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/03/2024 to 27/03/2025.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

- (e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.

Compliance Information

(e) The service submitted a notification of incident to the Early Years Inspectorate within 24 hours of such an incident occurring in the service on 28/08/2024.