

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015MO063

Name of Service: Kilmaine Scribbles Playgroup Ltd.

Address of Service: Kilmaine, Co. Mayo

Eircode: F31 T862

Name of Registered Provider: Darleen O'Malley

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 10/12/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate,
Child and Family Agency,
2nd Floor St Mary's HQ,
Castlebar,
Co Mayo.
F23HP58

Inspection undertaken by: B Lavin

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

Kilmaine Scribbles Playgroup provides sessional, part-time and full day childcare services and is located beside a primary school in the village of Kilmaine in county Mayo. The service is registered to provide services to pre-school children aged between 1 and 6 years of age daily from 07:30-18:00 hours. The building the service operates from is purpose built and has 3 playrooms (of which 2 were in use by preschool children during the inspection), a sleep-room, a kitchen, office and sanitary facilities. School aged childcare services are also provided in the building. Enclosed play areas are available to the children on the premises and accessible from the playrooms.

Staffing

At the time of the inspection there were 7 staff in the service caring for the children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 23. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within 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 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the person in charge was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

(2) Following a review of the service files and discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that there were 8 members of staff employed in the service.

(a) There were 14 of the required 16 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer.

(b) There were 2 written and appropriately validated references available from a source other than recent employer for 2 adults working in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the adults working in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were available for the 2 adults working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.

(4) The 8 staff members working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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) There were 6 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Play school room 1: Four adults cared for 18 children aged between 1 and 3 years of age.
- Play school room 2: Two adults cared for 18 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.
- Wobbler room was closed during the period on inspection and the children and staff from the wobbler room joined with the children from play school room 1.

One additional staff member provided relief cover for breaks and nappy changes.

(8) There were at least 2 adults present in the service at all times during the inspection.

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

Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were supported during mealtimes with feeding when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly when required and handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for warm one to one interaction.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- Older preschool children were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon. For children who did not require a sleep, appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Each room had its own designated outdoor play area with play materials designed for gross motor play. The children from each playroom spent time in their outdoor spaces exploring, climbing and playing.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter, showing affection and group story time.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.

- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. There was a child present who was new to the service and settling in. Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion, for example giving one to one attention, providing extra support at times of transition and moving at the child’s pace.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text. Children in the wobbler room had daily records completed and sent home to their parents.
- The staff were observed supporting and interacting with the children in a variety of ways- discussing, modelling and initiating games and activities.
- Small group play opportunities were encouraged and facilitated within the care room. This provided staff with opportunities to get to know the children better, quieter play time and a sensory rich experience. Small groups of children were observed washing plastic plates in a low sink.

Programme of activities

- There was a varied programme of activities offered to the children daily. This programme was developed with both short term and long-term goals. Themes were based on emerging interests and included dinosaurs, cars, ramps and construction.
- Each playroom had a record of activities book which was available for each parent to view in the service lobby.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

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

Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- In the morning before 09.00, the children had access to a selection of oat and wheat-based cereals, with milk and toast.

- At 10.20, the children had their snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, bread sticks, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, fruit pieces and yogurt.
- At 12:30, the children had their main meal. On the day of inspection, the main meal was bacon, mashed potatoes, vegetables and pasta.
- At 16:00, the children had snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, wraps, breadsticks, vegetables/fruit pieces and yogurt. There were additional snacks available within the service if the children required more.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children's snack/mealtimes, appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children.
- Clean and safe drinking water at a low-level drinks' tables were available and accessible to children in each playroom.
- There was a designated fridge for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children's lunch boxes for their snack times.

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:

- A bell system was in place on an internal entrance door to the service to control admission of people to the service. This door was secured during the inspection to prevent children from leaving unsupervised.
- Access to the kitchen was secured from children with safety gates.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.
- Visibility strips were installed on glass doors and windows for safety precautions and to prevent injury to children and staff.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after painting activities and before mealtimes.

- Warm water was available in all hand-washing basins with temperatures ranging from 32.2°C to 38.6°C.
- Paper towel, soap and lidded bins were available at the hand basins and sanitary areas in the service.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered to a child by staff on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available. It was safely stored and in date. In conversation staff were able to detail the procedures for administering medication to children.

Safe Sleep:

- Individual cots were available for the children under the age of 2 who required a nap.
- Stackable beds were available for the children aged over 2 who required a nap.
- Regular sleep checks were carried out on the children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A table in use for snack time in the playschool room 1 has chipped paint on the surface of the table. This posed a safety risk of ingestion of chipped paint.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy disposal bins in use in the service were not sealable and airtight and posed a risk of infection to children.
3. The sponges the children used to wash their snack plates were old and worn. This posed a risk of infection to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The table has been covered with a vinyl tablecloth. Staff will inform management of items needing repair.

Infection Control:

2. Appropriate nappy bins have been sourced and will be used within the sanitary rooms going forward.
3. The sponges have been replaced. Staff will replace items that need replacing.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence has been submitted to the Inspectorate.

Infection Control:

Documentation evidence has been submitted to the Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliances found on inspection.