

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN047
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Name of Service:	St. Fidelma's Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Corbally, Tulsk, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F45 YA32
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Payne
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	31/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy
Title:	Early Years Inspector

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

This community preschool service offers the options of full day care and part time care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional programme, Monday to Friday. The preschool caters for children aged between 2 and 6 years. Additionally, a school age programme with a breakfast club from 8.00hrs to 8.50hrs and an afterschool programme from 14.00hrs to 18.00hrs is offered. A child centred play based preschool curriculum focusing on emerging interests, and the Highscope pedagogy is provided. On the day of inspection, in the morning there were 29 preschool children, and, in the afternoon, there were 24 preschool children. Additionally, from 14.00hrs to 18.00hrs, 16 school aged children attended the services afterschool programme.

The preschool service is in a purpose-built detached premises, on its own grounds, in the village of Tulsk, Co. Roscommon. There are 2 playrooms, namely 'the Blue room' and 'the Red room'. Quiet rest areas in the form of soft matting / shapes are available in each playroom for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There is a designated kitchen where meals are prepared, cooked and stored on site. The pre-school children have access to secure outdoor play areas at the back of the preschool, for children's play activities, fresh air, and exploration.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and not on the premises, on a daily basis. There are a total of 13 staff currently working in the premises. There is a named person in charge and there is a named designated deputy. A total of 8 staff hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. Additionally, there are 2 staff employed for the school aged service, 3 chefs and a designated cleaner working in the premises. On the day inspection there were also two students on a work placement.

On the day of inspection, in the morning, there were 6 adult staff and, in the afternoon, there were 3 staff working directly with the children. The service manager acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection. The service chef was also working on the day 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.

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, 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.

(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 available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

There are thirteen staff employed in the service and all staff files were reviewed. There were two students on work experience on the premises on the day of the inspection and their files were also reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)&(b) 26 of the 26 validated references on file in respect of the 13 staff and 4 of the 4 validated references for the students on work experience were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 13 staff and the two students on work experience.
- The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Five of the thirteen staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and had the required police vetting.
- (4) Eight of the thirteen staff working directly with the children had evidence of a childcare qualification to 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.
- Three of the thirteen staff were designated chefs, one staff was employed as a cleaner and two staff were caring for the school aged children which was not part of this inspection and thereby did not require a childcare qualification.

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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, at 10.00hrs, there were 29 preschool children present with 6 staff working directly with, caring, and supervising these children.

Of the 29 children present; 4 children were aged 2-3 years, and 25 children were aged between 3-5 years.

From 12:00hrs 2 children were aged between 2-3 years and 16 children were aged between 3-5 years with 6 staff directly with, caring, and supervising these children.

From 14.00hrs, there were 2 children were aged between 2-3years and 8 children were aged between 3-5 years with 3 staff. directly with, caring, and supervising these children.

(8)(a) Documentary evidence indicated that at least 2 staff were on the premises at all times when the pre-school was operating.

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

- The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner and the children sat at age-appropriate low-level chairs and tables at their snack / mealtimes.
- The staff encouraged and supported the pre-school children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
- Five children wore nappies/pull ups and had their nappies/pull ups changed on a regular basis. These children were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained.
- The older children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting.
- Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.

- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
 - being actively involved in children's play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining when invited to by children);
 - behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
 - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language;
 - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
 - using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
 - The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
 - The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.
 - The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times.
 - Staff adjusted the level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.

- On the day of inspection, the children in the blue room were observed playing with tabletop activities, magnetic play, doing arts and crafts activities, making a swamp in the water tray, looking at books, and playing house / kitchen. The staff read stories and asked children their views on the story of *the tiger who had a tantrum.*”
- The children in the red room were observed playing in the home area with a selection of dolls and accessories, at tabletop activities including jigsaws, puzzles, sorting shapes, playing with accessories in the doll’s house. The children were observed at construction, singing, dancing, and playing with musical instruments.
- The children played games, puzzles, and insets. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles and on the farm. The children played ‘Mammy and Daddy’ with a selection of dolls, cots, and prams. ‘. The children enjoyed art and craft work including painting, drawing, and at playdough.
- On the day of inspection, all the children had the opportunity to play outside. In the outdoor areas to the rear and side of the premises, the children were observed climbing, on the slide, riding bicycles, push cars, scooters, and vehicles, running, sorting, and exploring.
- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children’s feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children’s actions and other’s responses. In all the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child’s activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Children’s behaviour was managed in a competent and positive manner by the staff. It was observed that minor problems were handled promptly and positively by the staff.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. For example, the inspectors noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used questions such as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told ‘no’.

Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

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 healthy eating policy was available for parents and guardians to view. There was a 4-week menu on display in the lobby area.
- Meals and snacks were prepared on site by the service chefs.
- In the morning, children were offered a selection of cereals and toast and juice.
- At 10.45hrs, the service offered the children a selection of crackers, cheese, yoghurt and a selection of fruits including apples, oranges, and grapes.
- The staff poured drinking water for each child.
- At 12:30hrs the service offered the children a selection of ham and cheese sandwiches.
- At 15:00hrs, the service offered chicken casserole with pasta.
- At 16:30hrs the service offered the children a selection of crackers and a selection of fruits.

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 entrance doors into the pre-school rooms had a system of security to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area.
- There was secure fencing around the oil tank thereby preventing potential access by the preschool children.

- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children’s reach.
- The water temperature was thermostatically controlled to facilitate hygienic hand washing without risk of scalding the children. The water temperature in the sanitary areas adjacent to the red room had a reading at 11.50hrs of 30°C and the water temperature in the sanitary area adjacent to the blue room had a reading at 12.10hrs of 34°C.
- In the playrooms, all toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the playrooms.

Infection Control:

- A cleaning and disinfection checklist was available in the service. The person in charge advised that the service had a cleaner who thoroughly cleaned each evening after the service had closed.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposal paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- There was liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing. There were disposable paper towels in the dispensers in the sanitary areas used by the children to facilitate hygienic hand drying.
- There was a designated nappy changing area. Staff involved in the serving of food and nappy changing used disposal aprons and gloves when nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- There were no medications administered to the children on the day of the inspection.
- It was advised by the staff presently no child is on medication. The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.
- All exit routes in the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The doors to the staff sanitary area, the staff room, and office had no system of security posing a potential access/safety risk.

Infection Control:

2. The mechanical ceiling vents in the children’s sanitary accommodation had evidence of dust and debris which could prevent them from operating effectively.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The person in charge submitted a written response on 4th of March to advise:

1. Locks were bought to secure the doors of the staff sanitary area, the staff room, and office and a staff notice issued and placed on staff notice board. Signage has been placed on the doors to ensure that anyone using these areas close and secure doors after leaving.

Infection Control:

2. Dust was removed immediately, and vents cleaned. The ventilation systems have been added to general room cleaning sheets and building cleaning sheets

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the locks fitted on the doors to the staff sanitary area, the staff room, and office and signage placed on doors to remind staff to ensure they are secured at all times.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of the cleaned mechanical vents in the children's sanitary accommodation and dusted mechanical vents now included on the cleaning sheets.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and the evidence submitted and deems it to meet Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-
- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and
 - (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

- (1) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Nine adults had current training in first aid responder training.
- (2)(a) The first aid boxes were appropriately stocked with items safely stored and easily accessible by the adults in a conspicuous position on a high press in the preschool rooms.
- (b)The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were available to the children attending the pre-school 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 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 written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service.
The last recorded fire drill was on 29/01/ 2024.
- (b)Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated December 2023.
The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 13/10/2023.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2024 covered 42 children full day care and included the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision