

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015SO026				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Claire Barden Award Winning Childcare Ballymote				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cornmill, Gurteen Road, Ballymote, Co. Sligo				
<b>Eircode:</b>	N/A				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Claire Barden				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/09/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>38</td> <td>PM</td> <td>33</td> </tr> </table>	AM	38	PM	33
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L Costello and K Folan				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This full day care service is located in an urban area in Ballymote, County Sligo. The service is registered to cater for children aged from 0-6 years of age between the hours of 07:30- 18:00. A registered school age service is also provided by the service. The premises is a single storey building purpose built for the provision of childcare services. There are four playrooms, an additional small playroom to the front of the building known as the “library room”, a kitchen, sanitary accommodation and a large outdoor play area located to the rear and sides of the building. A log cabin with care room located in the back was not in use on the day of inspection

### Staffing

There were a total of nine adults including the registered provider employed in the service. Six adults were present and working directly with the preschool children on the morning of the inspection.

### Methodology

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

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

The findings on inspection are based on:

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

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16k, 19, 23, 25 and 28. 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.*

### Compliance Information

1) (a) (b).

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(2) (a) (b).

The records of all nine adults employed in the service were reviewed.

Seventeen written and verified past employer references and one reference from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the nine adults employed in the service.

c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine adults in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required as all the adults employed in the service that had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Nine adults 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 six adults working directly with 38 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a staffing rosters showed that an adequate number of adults were planned to work directly with the children during service hours of operation. The registered provider was also on site available to cover breaks as required.

(2)  
The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced 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:

Montessori playroom: 2 adults cared for 11 children aged 4 to 5 years of age.

Preschool playroom: 1 adult cared for 10 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

Babies' playroom: 1 adult cared for 4 children aged 1 to 2.5 years of age.

Toddlers' playroom: 2 adults cared for 13 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.

In the afternoon at 14.00 the following ratios applied:

Montessori playroom: 2 adults cared for 9 children aged 4 to 5 years of age.

Preschool playroom: 1 adult cared for 7 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

Babies' playroom: 1 adult cared for 5 children aged 1 to 2.5 years of age.

Toddlers' playroom: 2 adults cared for 12 children aged from 3 years to 5 years of age.

(8)  
The registered provider always ensured that there was always at least two adults on the premises when children were present as evidenced by a review of attendance records.

### 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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a record referred to in subparagraph (h), (j) or (k) of paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service, or in the case of a preschool service in a drop-in centre or of a temporary pre-school service, for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

#### Compliance Information

(1) (k)

A sample review of eighteen incident and accident reports completed between July and September 2024 were reviewed. All reports clearly documented the incident and the follow up action taken in respect of all 18 reports.

The registered provider had ensured that parents had been informed of the incident and any remedial action taken.

(2) (b)

The registered provider confirmed they are aware of the required retention period of two years of all accident and incident reports.

(3)

All records were made available on the day for inspection by the authorised person.

### 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*

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a)

On the day of inspection four care rooms were in operation. The Montessori room catered for the older preschool child and was resourced with a variety of equipment a range of play-based materials and specialist Montessori equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity and spontaneous play. This room was decorated with the children's artwork and there was evidence of the curriculum displayed on the walls of the Montessori room. The children moved around this area freely, directing their own sense of play.

The preschool room was decorated with educational posters, graduation photographs and the children's art work. The room was laid out to facilitate a variety of experiences. Fine motor development was supported through the use of jigsaws, puzzles, shape sorters and crayons and paper to draw on located on open level shelving ensuring accessibility to all. Home corners and construction areas allowed for development of the imagination, while a

library area supported language development. On the day children were observed participating in circle time, singing songs and learning the days of the week, months of the year. Staff members were observed to be supportive to the preschool child, constantly using praise and encouragement when attempting songs or completing tasks.

The toddler room was decorated with age-appropriate toys and resources suitable to the stage of the child. Interest areas were spacious, uncluttered, and resourced offering an adequate range of toys and materials on low level shelving that were freely and readily accessible to children. The Toddler room included a role play shop which included resources such as cash register and food items this encouraged imaginary play. A kitchen equipped with pots and pans and crockery encouraged role play. The children were observed to move around this area freely, playing in groups and individually. This room had direct access to the outdoors which provided an alternative area to develop gross motor skills with bikes and trikes or play in mud kitchens.

The baby room had a soft matting area providing a safe area for the younger children to play and explore. This area was equipped with a variety of resources to stimulate the child, including bright colours, soft toys, musical instruments, building blocks. This room also had direct access to a roofed outdoor space which ensured access to the outdoors in all weathers. This outdoor area was equipped with play houses, bikes and trikes suitable to the age and stage of the children using them.

The outdoor area included four different spaces all equipped with a variety of equipment and resources to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child. Wooden busses and tree houses allowed for opportunities for role play, while tunnels, slides and swings provided opportunity for adventure. Resources of bikes, trikes, ride on toys and footballs allowed for gross motor skill development.

(1) (b)

The service provided a main meal of pasta bolognese on the day of inspection, all other meals and snacks are provided from home and stored in fridges located in each care room. Children sat at low level tables and chairs at snack time and staff members sat beside them supporting as required.

Children who were toilet trained were supervised from a distance, staff offering prompts if needed. Nappy changing was observed to be in line with policy and children were changed as required.

The sleep needs of the preschool children were met with a dedicated sleep room for the younger children. A structured sleep plan was in place; however, staff were mindful to respond to the children's cues and if tired children were supported to sleep.

Communication with parents took place verbally on arrival and collection to the service where important information could be exchanged. For the younger children this included sleep times, nutrition and wet and soiled

nappies. Text messages are also used to communicate with parents, this is generally reminding parents of equipment required eg nappies and wipes.

### 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 service was secure on arrival and a bell entry system was in place ensuring no unauthorised access to the service.
- Internal doors throughout the service were secured where necessary to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- Windows had been risk assessed with restrictors in place as required.
- All blind cords were secured to the wall.
- Toys and play equipment were in good condition and well maintained.
- Flexes and cables remained out of reach of the preschool children.

##### Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for adequate hand hygiene.
- All care rooms were observed to be visibly clean with cleaning schedules available and up to date.

##### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection, however on interview staff were knowledgeable of the procedures required for administering of medication.

##### Safe Sleep:

- The service had one designated sleep room with four standard cots provided.
- All cots were equipped with the appropriate mattress and a waterproof protector to ensure appropriate cleaning between uses.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire doors remained free from obstruction throughout the day.
- Fire evacuation notices were clearly displayed in all care rooms.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The waste bins in the outdoor area were accessible to the preschool child which could pose a risk of harm to the preschool child.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

In a written response the registered provider stated:

A new lock has been placed on the gate and staff have been informed to ensure it is secure after use.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic documentation submitted.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

## 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 had two members of staff trained in first aid responder who were available to the preschool children throughout the day if required.

(2) (a) (b)

A fully stocked first aid box with suitable equipment was located in the central preschool room and readily available to the preschool children in the case of an emergency.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service provided evidence of adequate insurance for 55 preschool children up to the 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025.