

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015SO052

Name of Service: Scooters Creche & Montessori

Address of Service: Rusheen Ard, Caltragh, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F91 HP49

Name of Registered Provider: Catriona Belton

Service type: Full Day

Date(s) of Inspection: 18/02/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	46

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L. Costello
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

Scooters Creche & Montessori full day care service is located in a residential area of Sligo town. A service is provided to children aged between 1 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 7:30am to 6:30pm as per the national register. The service also provides a school aged service.

Staffing

There are 13 adults employed in the service. On the day 11 adults worked directly with the children including the person in charge. The registered provider who works directly with the children was on leave at the time of inspection. There was one adult employed as cook. Three students were on placement in the 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 and facilities*. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1) (2) (4), 11 (1) (2), 17, 19 (1), 20 (1) (2), 23, and 24. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1), 20, 23, 24. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the following rooms: Toddler room, Wobbler room and Junior Montessori.

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)(b)

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

(1) (c)

There is a clear management structure within the service with Person in charge, deputy person in charge, room leaders and childcare workers.

(2)

Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that six new members of staff and three students commenced working in the service since the last inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

- (a) Twelve validated references were available from a past employer.
 - (b) Two validated references were available in the absence of a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting was available for all 16 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 available for the three adults who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.
- (4)
- Six 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

Four validated references were not available in respect of three students on placement within the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) (c)

Character references have been obtained for each of the students. All staff including students will have references before they commence working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated References submitted to the inspectorate.

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 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore 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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for full time services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were forty-seven children attending the service being supervised by twelve adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a)
There were two adults on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The Registered provider ensured that all parents of children proposing to attend the service were provided with a parental handbook that outlined the requirements of Regulation 16 (1) (a) to (g).

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

A selection of rooms were sampled under this regulation, as a result the scope of the inspection included the following rooms: Toddler room, Wobbler room and Junior Montessori

(1) (a) (b)

Basic Needs:

- The service has a healthy eating policy in place and provide all meals and snacks to the children in the service. On the day, morning snack was a fruit platter with yoghurt. The main meal served in the dining room consisted of potato mash, Savory mince and carrots. The cook informed the inspector of the alternatives that were available should a child not like the dinner. Food preferences and intolerances are catered for within the service.
- Nappy changing was observed within the service and staff members were seen to take this time as an opportunity for one-to-one engagement with the preschool child. The older children were encouraged to

use the bathroom independently and staff members positioned themselves in ear shot to provide assistance if required.

- Sleep and rest time was provided for the younger children with a dedicated sleep room for the babies and standard floor beds for the toddlers. Children were supervised with regular ten-minute physical checks to ensure the correct room temperature, position and colour of the children.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff members were observed to be kind and considerate in their interactions with the children in all rooms.
- During meals the staff members sat at the table in the dining room and engaged in social conversation with the children, promoting a relaxed atmosphere. The staff members sat at the children's level when feeding the younger children or when assisting the children to feed themselves.
- In the junior Montessori, staff supported children to engage positively with one another and the children were encouraged to engage in play activities that required turn taking and sharing. Staff members were heard encouraging children to be mindful of the feelings of those around them which promoted an ethos of friendship and working together.
- Children in the wobbler room were observed to be held and cuddled as required particularly after waking where children became unsettled.

Physical Materials:

- Rooms were laid out to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child with age-appropriate resources.
- The wobbler room had several soft play areas and toys suitable for the younger child learning to walk. Toys and materials were clean and appropriate to the age of the child.
- Junior Montessori had a large variety of resources stored on open shelving to allow for freedom of choice. Puzzles and jig saws allowed for fine motor skill development, arts and crafts allowed for creativity. A home corner equipped with toys and resourced allowed for role play.

Programme of Activities:

- Evidence of the children's learning and curriculum was visible in all care rooms as the children's artwork was on display. Valentines' day themed art added colour to the toddler room and junior Montessori.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling in the three rooms which were observed during the inspection.

- Children were observed to direct their own sense of play moving freely around rooms, choosing toys and resources. Children were encouraged to play individually and in groups, creating learning opportunities for sharing and turn taking.

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-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (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) (a)

The registered provider ensured that there was adequate and suitable facilities for the children to play indoors and outdoors throughout the day as follows:

- Play spaces were clean, organised and free of clutter.
- Interest areas were organised and allowed for free movement between interest areas.
- The indoor area allowed for opportunities for the following types of play: imaginary, creative, literacy, gross and fine motor skill development.
- The outdoor area allowed for opportunities for gross motor skill development, imaginary play and risk taking.

(1) (b)

The registered provider ensured there was adequate facilities for rest and sleep as follows:

In the Toddler Room:

- A soft floor matting area equipped with child size furniture was available for children to rest or opt out of an activity.
- Floor mats were provided at the scheduled sleep time for all children in the wobbler room to avail of sleep or rest.

In the Wobbler room:

- Soft matting with child size soft leather furniture was available for children to relax.
- A designated sleep room with standard cots, suitable bed linen was available for those children aged under 2 years of age.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b)

In preschool Montessori, no area for rest or relaxation was provided. At approx. 11.51 children seated at the table were informed to put their head on the table to rest if needed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b)

Cushions have been purchased, and a rest area has been created for the room. There is now a rest area in each room.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence 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 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.

Infection Control:

- There were adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and when interviewed staff were aware of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.

Fire Safety:

- All evacuation doors remained free of hazards on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Infant formula was sent in from not premade as required to ensure safety for the child.

Infection Control:

2. Hand hygiene was not completed routinely for children after nappy changes.
3. Aprons were not changed between nappy changes posing a risk of infection control.
4. Snacks including fruit were placed directly on to the table in the toddler room posing a risk of contamination.

- Highchairs were stored in the bathroom in the toddler area posing a risk of contamination.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication records were not signed by the parents to state they were aware that medication had been given within the service posing a risk of double dosing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

In a written response the Registered Provider stated:

General Safety:

- Parents have been informed that bottles are to be made up at home and brought into the service. This has been added to our policies and parents have been made aware.

Infection Control:

- Staff meeting has been held to remind all staff to change their apron after each nappy change. Spot checks are being carried out on a regular basis.
- Staff meeting has been held to re-iterate the importance of hand hygiene for both children and staff. Staff have read the handwashing policy and are frequently reminded by management. Spot checks are being carried out on a regular basis.
- Plates have been provided for each child for their morning snack. Extra plates have been purchased.
- Highchairs have been removed from the Toddler bathroom. Highchairs are no longer stored in bathrooms.

Administration of Medication:

- The policy has been updated for parents to initial all medicines after administration. All staff are aware that parents have to initial medicine forms which will be checked by management

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentary evidence

Infection Control:

- Documentary evidence submitted
- Photographic evidence submitted.

4. Photographic evidence submitted.
5. Photographic evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

6. Documentary evidence 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 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.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that all children were checked in and out of the service as evidenced in the attendance records in each room.
- (3) (a) (b)
- A visitors' book is in place to ensure that all visitors to the service including contractors are approved entry and a record is kept of same.
- (4)
- The registered provider of the regulatory requirement to retain these records for a period of one year.