

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO053		
Name of Service:	Lollipop Lane Ox Crescent		
Address of Service:	24 Ox Crescent, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo		
Eircode:	F91 Y952		
Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Kilbane		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	20/11/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM 18
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 and S Killeen		
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
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Description of service

Lollipop Lane Ox Crescent is a private full day care early years service. The service caters for children aged 1 to 6 years, operating from 7:45am to 6pm five days per week, 48 weeks per year. The service is located in an adapted two storey building in a residential estate in a rural town in South Sligo. There are three care rooms in operation. On the first floor is 'Blooms Room' catering for children 2.8 years upwards, with the ground floor containing two care rooms named 'Seedlings room' with children aged between 1 and 2 years, and 'Buds room' catering for children aged between 2 and 3 years. Also situated on the ground floor is a nappy changing area, sanitary accommodation, a sleep room, staff room, an office, laundry area and a kitchen. Two outdoor play areas are available to the side/rear and the front of the building.

Staffing

Nine adults are employed in the service, of which six adults provided direct care to the preschool children on the day of inspection. The person in charge is office based and provides support to staff covering breaks in the service throughout the day. One adult works in the Kitchen.

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, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 26. 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 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 named person in charge and a person to deputise as required.

(b) A review of records demonstrated that the person in charge or deputy person is available at all times while the service is operating.

(c) There is a clear structure of management in the service to include child care educators, supervisors and person in charge.

(2) (a) (b)

Ten adults are employed in the service and all ten records were reviewed on the day.

Fifteen verified references from a past employer and five verified references from another source in the absence of a past employer were available for all ten adults employed in the service.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all ten adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early years Regulatory notice requiring all services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available for the three adults employed in the service that had lived outside of the state for 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 was an adequate number of staff working directly with the preschool children on the inspector's arrival to the service. There were five adults providing direct care to 24 children. The person in charge was also available to cover breaks or nappy changes.

(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:

- Seedlings Room: 1 adult cared for 3 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Buds Room: 1 adult cared for 5 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Booms Room: 3 adults cared for 16 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age.

In the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- Seedlings Room: 1 adult cared for 3 children aged from 1 to 2 years of age.
- Buds Room: 1 adult cared for 5 children aged from 2 to 3 years of age.
- Booms Room: 3 adults cared for 16 children aged from 3 to 4 years of age

(8) The registered provider demonstrated that there is a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times while the service is in operation.

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)

Three rooms were in operation on the day of inspection, 'seedlings', 'buds' and 'blooms'. 'Seedlings' cater for preschool children aged one to two years and is equipped with a variety of toys and resources suitable to this age group. Open shelving stocked with puzzles, jigsaws and small world figures and animals, provide opportunities for children to develop coordination and fine motor dexterity. Home corners with kitchen and equipment facilitate role play while soft toys and dolls provide opportunities for imaginative play. The children were observed to move around the area freely playing with the variety of toys available to them. Most of the children were new to this room and transition plans had been in place for the first few weeks, building up time in the preschool to ensure the children settle in well and are as comfortable as possible before attending the service full time. The service had made efforts to copy the home routine, with a similar structured day for nap times. A photo story book accessible in the room acts as a reminder of the children's routine, this ensures that all staff are familiar, and the needs of the child are met promptly. The 'Bud's' room have a similar structure in place where the transition from one room to the next is done in a smooth way, beginning with visits to the room before the change to moving to the room on a full-time basis. This transition is well planned out and specific to the individual needs of the children. The 'Buds' room is decorated with mosaics of the children's educational journey in the service which included painting with raspberries, nature trails and Halloween fun. The 'Buds' room is sufficiently equipped with a variety of resources and toys to suit the needs of the children aged two to three years using this room. Open shelving facilitates choice as the children direct their own sense of play. In the 'Blooms' room the children's learning journey was evidenced in individual scrap books where the parents are invited to the preschool to review and keep up to date on their children's learning. Evidence of artwork is displayed on the walls and the children

have access to a wide variety of resources. The room is well laid out with various interest areas to stimulate the imagination of the preschool child. Home corners and construction areas allow for imaginative play. An arts and crafts area allow for opportunities for creativity. A rest area with library aids language development. Puzzles, jigsaws and tabletop activities facilitate fine motor skill development.

The outdoor area allows for a change of environment and an opportunity to play in nature. The outdoor area is secured by a concrete fence and had a surface of grass and concrete foot path. Children are provided with wet gear to ensure that access to the outdoors happens in all weathers. Equipment in the outdoors area include see saws, slides and ride on toys all supporting gross motor skill development.

(1) (b)

The care needs observed on the day were appropriate to the needs of the preschool child. Mealtimes were facilitated in a calm and relaxed manner. In the 'Seedlings' room, children were seated in highchairs or lower chairs at a table if suitable. The staff members sat with children promoting independence with feeding and supporting if required. In the 'Buds' room the preschool children lined up to wash their hands prior to mealtimes while their room was set up, the table laid out with a tablecloth and cutlery. A positive mealtime experience was observed with the children interacting with their peers and staff members.

Nappy changing was observed to be in line with the service policy, the staff members took this time for one-to-one interaction with the preschool child, singing songs or engaging in conversation. In the older room, where children were toilet trained independence was promoted. Picture stories of hand washing and using the toilet were displayed over the sanitary accommodation as visual prompters for the preschool children.

Staff members on the day were observed to be kind and caring to the preschool children. Staff members were aware of the children's needs and responsive to them. Positive interactions were observed throughout the service with affection given as needed particularly with the younger children who required hugs and comfort through the settling in process.

Sleep was observed to be individual and responsive to the children's needs. The 'Seedlings' room had a varied sleep pattern which copied the pattern at home. Therefore, children were put down for nap times at various times throughout the day. The 'Bud's room had a structured sleep after dinner, where all five children were supported for rest time with individual floor beds. Soft music played in the background to aid sleep and relaxation, and a staff member remained in the room at all times completing physical sleep checks every ten minutes. The 'Blooms' room also had a rest time after dinner where the lights were dimmed and soft music played while the children got comfortable on soft matting on the floor. This time was used for rest and wind down time as the children do not go to sleep but have relaxation time.

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. The service had a bell entry system which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- Cleaning schedules were in place and up to date across the service. The service was visibly clean on the day.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were two highchairs with harness safety straps fitted that were in good condition.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with waste bins stored out of reach of children.
- Windows had safety restrictors in place across the service.
- The boiler system was secure with a metal fencing ensuring it was inaccessible to the preschool child.

Infection Control:

- Indoor shoes were worn by children in the service and inspectors were given shoe covers to reduce the risk of contamination.
- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available for effective hand hygiene.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior and post mealtimes and after messy play.
- Tissues were available in all rooms for children who had runny noses.
- All waste bins were the required foot operated pedal bins.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day. However, on interview staff members were knowledgeable with the process of administering medication and the requirement for consent of the parent or guardian prior to administration.

Safe Sleep:

- A dedicated sleep room was available on the ground floor adjacent to the seedlings room. Three standard cots were available for those children under two years of age.
- Standard floor beds were available for those over two. On the day of inspection five children were observed in the 'Buds' room asleep on the floor beds.
- Room temperatures were maintained within the required safe sleep room temperatures at 16.8°C.

Fire Safety:

- Fire emergency doors remained unobstructed throughout the course of the inspection.
- An evacuation cot was available in the seedlings sleep room.
- Fire evacuation plans were clearly displayed across the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) A blind chord in the 'blooms room' had become unsecure from the wall and required to be secure. This chord was out of reach of children, however accessible if children decided to climb.

Infection Control:

- (2) A radiator in the blooms room had accumulations of rust, therefore making effective cleaning difficult.
- (3) Floor mats and cushions in the Blooms room had evidence of rips and exposing foam and required to be replaced.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

In a written response from the registered provider:

General Safety:

1. The blind cord in the Blooms room has been screwed to the wall. A section has been added to our Daily Room Inspection/Health and Safety Checklist for staff to check the blind and cords are safe and secure daily both in the AM and PM and sign off to say this has been carried out. Staff will notify management if any issues arise.

Infection Control:

2. All radiators have been painted. Radiators have been added to the daily room check list.
3. Mats and cushions with exposed foam have been removed and replaced with cushions. This has been added to the daily check list.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence submitted
3. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

Ther corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed 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 registered provider demonstrated that there was sufficient number of staff in the service trained in First Aid responder and available to the preschool children.
- (2) (a) (b)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the first and ground floor of the service and accessible to the preschool children if required.

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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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)

The service demonstrated that fire evacuation drills take place monthly in the service with the most recent drill on the 24th of October 2024.

(b)

Evidence of the service firefighting equipment with a service date of November 2024 was available on the day of inspection.

(2) (c)

These records were made available for review on the day for the inspector.

(4)

Fire evacuation notices were clearly displayed across the service. Easy read picture formats were available for the preschool children to ensure they understood the evacuation process.