

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015TY042

**Name of Service:** Little Feet

**Address of Service:** Bredagh, Lorrha, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

**Eircode:** E45 DN73

**Name of Registered Provider:** Charlene Duane

**Service type:** Part Time

**Date of Inspection:** 20/02/2024

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	9	PM	6
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary

**Inspection undertaken by:** L McGeeney

**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

This sessional and part-time service was established to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9.15am – 2.15pm, for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a three-hour sessional service from 9.15am – 12.15pm, Monday – Friday, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme, for eligible children. Some of the children attend the service Little Feet Childminding, which is located on the same site, in the afternoon.

The service is located in a purpose converted building behind the registered provider’s premises in a rural area in north Tipperary, near the village of Lorrha.

### Staffing

The registered provider currently works in the service on three days each week and is available on site on the other two days. A second member of staff works in the service two days a week as the person in charge.

### 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11, 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

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 registered provider, person in charge and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

(9)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) Not assessed as part of the inspection process as there had been no new staff since the last inspection on 4 November 2021. Staff files for existing staff were reviewed previously and were found to be compliant.

(4) Staff who work in the service hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 6 or 7 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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).*

*(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 nine children aged between 2 years 10 months and 5 years being supervised by a member of staff during the morning session. Between 12.15pm and 1.15pm, there were 6 children being supervised by one member of staff. The registered provider was also present on the premises while the service was in operation.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the requirements.

(8)(a) There were two staff on the premises at all times while the service was in operation.

### 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 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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to a large, bright, rectangular activity room with a high ceiling and lots of natural light from windows in three walls. The room was well laid out in a number of defined interest areas such as the soft play area, home corner, floor play and library area, art area, tabletop activities and dining area, music and movement area, Montessori and practical life area and puzzles and manipulative play materials area.

The walls and windows were covered with examples of the children’s artwork and posters of interest to the child, which were sited on the lower portion of the walls where the children could see them properly and engage with them.

The room opened directly into the outdoor play area, to which the children had daily access.

(b) The children could rest and relax throughout the day in the soft play area and on the large floor rug beside the library. The soft play area had a padded vinyl covered floor and sides as well as multiple vinyl covered foam shapes and circular cushion to sit on. If a child wanted to sleep, they could do so on the available camp beds.

(3)(a) The children had access to two outdoor play spaces: an enclosed yard with a concrete surface to the front of their building and a large grass covered garden to the side of the building. The children brought rubber boots and there was a supply of wet weather overalls available for each child to ensure that they could play outside each day.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The activity room and outdoor areas were very well resourced with a wide range and quantity of good quality toys, materials and furniture. There were wooden, child sized tables and chairs in several areas of the room to facilitate tabletop activities, dining, creative and imaginative play. Large, floor to ceiling cupboards were built-in along the wall near the entrance door to the room. These cupboards had space for the children’s outdoor clothes and belongings as well as rotated toys, seasonal materials and additional art supplies or other equipment used in the service.

Toys and materials for the children to work with and explore were easily accessible to them on child height open shelving units. Toys were well organised into interest areas which supported the children to find, use and return any materials they wanted to engage with independently.

Free-standing units such as the painting easels, shop, work bench, kitchen, dolls house and mobile library cart were used to mark areas of interest.

The garden area had many areas of interest including two play sheds for outdoor play in all weathers, a wooden bridge, stationary car and train, post office building, swing set and sand pit. Outdoor storage containers were used for the storage of outdoor equipment such as balls, vehicles, buckets and spades.

There was a storage shed adjacent to the enclosed courtyard for the storage of the ride-on toys and vehicles such as tricycles and tractors.

### 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 service had a healthy eating policy. Food eaten by the children during the day was supplied by their parents. There was a fridge in the activity room where the children placed their lunchboxes and drink bottles each morning and accessed independently throughout the day when they wanted something to eat or drink. The children sat and ate their lunch together at 11.25am. Food eaten on the day of inspection included: crackers, sandwiches, bread sticks, bread rolls, cheese, wraps, rice cakes, fromage frais and fruit (bananas, apples, strawberries, mandarins and raisins). In the afternoon the children ate from their lunchbox again when it suited them. All of the children had water to drink throughout the day. They brought their own drink bottles which were refilled with water when empty. The service policy was that children could bring water or milk to drink in line with national guidance on the healthiest drinks for children.

### 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*

### Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge in the service on the day of inspection was responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children in the attendance register.

(3)(a) Staff ensured that only authorised persons could enter the premises. Visitors to the service were met at the front door of the service, which was kept secured.

### 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 held current certification in first aid response (FAR), valid until January 2026.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box and a separate burns first-aid box available in the activity room.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child attending the 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 16 January 2024.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in March 2023. The wired smoke alarm system was serviced on a twice-yearly basis.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to follow in the event of a fire displayed on a wall in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider had current insurance for a part-time daycare service catering for up to 20 children at any one time valid until 27 March 2024.