

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY066
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Name of Service:	St. Sheelan's Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Templemore, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 NY60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Noel Colleran
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	20/07/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 full day care service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 8am – 6pm for 51 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from a detached, two-storey, purpose-built premises on the grounds of Templemore College of Further Education in the town of Templemore in North Tipperary. The service has three activity rooms, office, kitchen, sleep rooms and sanitary accommodation areas downstairs and two activity rooms, office, staff room and sanitary accommodation areas upstairs. There are outdoor play areas both upstairs and downstairs.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The person in charge on a daily basis is the service manager. There were seven staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection, including one member of staff who worked between rooms to cover breaks. The service administrator and catering staff were also present on the day of inspection.

There are 18 staff employed in the service including the service manager, administrator, catering staff, cleaning staff, childcare staff and one member of staff employed under a community employment scheme who has almost completed studies towards a level 5 qualification in early childhood care and development.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(8), 19(1)(a), 23 and 29.

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

(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

(2) There had been no changes in staff since the last inspection on 29 September 2022. Staff files of all existing staff had been reviewed previously and found to be compliant.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 8 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.

(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 7 staff working directly with 31 children in the morning and 30 children in the afternoon. The children were aged between 14 months and 5 years old and were cared for in three groups.

There was 1 member of staff supervising 4 children aged 14 to 18 months old; 3 staff supervising 11 children aged 21 months to 3 years old and 3 staff supervising 15 children aged 3 – 5 years old. The service manager was available to provide relief in the rooms if required.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements throughout the day in each room/group.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present in the service at all times while it was 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

Compliance Information

The following was observed on the day of inspection through review of records, discussions with staff and direct observation:

The children enjoyed freedom of movement both indoors and outdoors. There were cosy areas in each room where the children could rest and relax when they wanted to, in addition to the sleep facilities.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. They were provided with meals and snacks during the day and were given as much time as they needed to eat and enjoy their meals.

Staff were observed to be engaged with the children and active in their play and exploration in both indoor and outdoor settings. When working with the younger children in particular, staff were observed working at the children's eye level.

The staff supported children with transitions. On the day of inspection there was one child attending for short days as part of their settling-in period and another child spent part of the day in the room they were moving on to. This allowed the children to adjust to the changes at a pace that suited them.

The children's experiences outside their attendance at the service were recorded and celebrated.

The older children used the 'weekend book' to record their stories from home in photos and text, which were then shared with their friends. The children also kept scrapbooks with samples of their work and photos of their activities in the service. These books were accessible to the children at all times. Staff reported that the children enjoyed looking through them and talking about their contents.

The inspection was carried out during the summertime when there were less children present and the structure of the day was relaxed, with large periods of time spent outdoors. The children were observed to be content and confident in exploring their environment and engaging in activities of their choice.

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 children were supervised when using the stairs to access the upstairs rooms. The stairwell was well lit and there were handrails for the staff and children to use.

The children did not have access to the kitchen.

Outdoor equipment with a fall height greater than 60cm was positioned on soft fall matting.

Infection Control:

The service had an infection control policy that was reviewed as part of the inspection process.

There was a detailed cleaning schedule for the service which included the frequency and method of cleaning toys, materials, surfaces and fixtures. Cleaning tasks were signed off on when completed. Deep cleaning was carried out following a recent outbreak of infectious disease.

The manager sought advice from the department of public health when necessary.

The children and staff washed their hands on arrival into the service each morning. There were sink units in each room as well as in the sanitary accommodation units to support this. Hand washing was also carried out at appropriate times during the day such as before eating and after playing outdoors or using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being administered to a child in the service, including both prescription and non-prescription medications.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. There were two sleep rooms with six standard cots in one and nine in the other. Camp beds were laid out in the Toddler room after dinner for the older children who slept. The children were supervised while they slept. Sleep areas were made comfortable to support the children to sleep restfully at sleep times, such as the control of room temperature, lowering of lights and use of white noise machines. The room temperature of sleep rooms was maintained between 16 and 20°C, as recommended.

Sleep checks were carried out at ten minute intervals with the exception of children who had bumped their head in the hours before sleep time, in which case, sleep checks were increased to five minute intervals. Sleep checks were recorded using an electronic application designed for use in childcare services.

Fire Safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

The service had a fire-evacuation cot to make it easier to get the younger children out of the building for fire drills or in the event of a fire.

Outing:

The service had an outings policy which was reviewed as part of the inspection process. Recurring outings included visits to attractions in the town such as the library, playground and town park. These outings were usually undertaken on foot and were dependant on weather conditions and having the correct adult to child ratio for outings.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(b) The service was safe and secure. Entry to the service for staff, children, parents and visitors was through the entrance door in the front of the premises. There were emergency exit doors into the car park and into the outdoor play area which were not used for normal entry and exit. A new electronic locking system had been fitted to the entrance door since the last inspection in September 2022.

The system had a push bell at the door which rang in the office and the baby room to alert staff that someone was seeking entry. There was a speaker function which allowed staff to speak to the caller. There were glass panels in the entrance door which let staff see who was outside before opening the door.

The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and gates to prevent unauthorised access to the premises and to prevent a child exiting the service via the outdoor play area.

The children did not have access to the kitchen.

(c) Most of the rooms in the premises, with the exception of some sanitary accommodation areas, were naturally lit through windows. The windows were openable to allow for natural ventilation. Mechanical ventilation was used in the internal sanitary accommodation areas. On the day of inspection the doors between the activity rooms and outdoor play areas were kept open. The service was heated by an oil fired, underfloor heating system that was thermostatically controlled. The two boilers were replaced recently. Room heating was not required on the day of inspection as it was the summer.

(d) The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Toys and materials were checked regularly and removed if in need of repair or replacement. The walls of the premises were in good repair and painted when required.

(e) The service had sufficient sanitary accommodation for the staff and children present. Sanitary accommodation areas were located off the activity rooms and included toilets and wash hand basins for the children and staff as well as nappy changing facilities for the children who were not toilet trained.

Non-Compliance Information

(a) The service has experienced ongoing issues with the roof, which was constructed as a flat roof to function as the floor of the outdoor play area for the upstairs rooms. The service manager stated that the builders used the wrong felt on the roof, which was too thin for the purpose. This has resulted in the roof windows leaking in heavy rain and part of the outdoor play area has been unusable and made inaccessible until remedial works are completed. The service recently secured funding to correct these problems.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Building works are due to begin end of September 23 to rectify the roof issue. Yearly risk assessment will be carried out to highlight early any issues re water ingress in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

The contract for the proposed works was received by the inspector on 28 August 2023.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.