

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD006
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Name of Service:	Baile Beag First Steps Creche
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Address of Service:	Ballybeg Community Centre, St. Saviour's Parish Centre Grounds, Ballybeg, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 N265
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Name of Registered Provider:	Doireann Nix
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	74
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry N Ruddy
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager

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

Baile Beag First Steps Creche is a community service which is registered to provide a full day care service to children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The service is operated from a single-story purpose-built premises. The service consists of five preschool rooms, an onsite catering kitchen, toilets, hallway, a staff room, an office and an outdoor play area to the rear of the service. The service also offers an Early Years Care and Education Programme (ECCE) to children.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 33 staff. The registered provider works directly with the children. There are 2 maintenance personnel, a chef, an administrator, and 3 staff who are employed through a community employment scheme. All staff working directly with the children held a minimum of level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4) (9)(7)(a) (b),

Regulation 11 Staff Ratios (1)(3),

Regulation 19 Care and Welfare of the children.

Regulation 23 Safety Health and Welfare of the children.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 Care and Welfare of the child as a result, the scope of the inspection included:

The baby room,

The toddler room,

The wobbler room.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered following receipt of information by the Inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The registered provider was the person in charge on the day of inspection and remained in the service to facilitate the inspection. A deputy manager was also available throughout the day.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 33 staff employed in the service including the registered provider. There were 66 required written references available on file for staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all 33 staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for 31 staff.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for six staff members who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with the preschool children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from Level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)(a)(b)

The inspectors were assured that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and training in relation to the policies and procedures in place in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspectors were clear in their understanding of their responsibilities in the service in relation to Children First and mandated persons responsibilities. There was evidence in the service that most staff had carried out this training in early 2024.

Documents reviewed on the day of inspection demonstrated the service had supported staff in ongoing professional development. Certificates of training in positive behaviour management, building effective relationships with parents and dignity and respect in the workplace were evident in many of the staff files reviewed on the day of inspection. Staff were advancing their third level qualifications while working in the setting and a broad variety of other training courses had also been participated in.

There was evidence of staff support and development within the setting. The management team outlined the support provided to new staff and students and there was an appraisal mechanism in place for all staff. Staff who were working on a community employment scheme described the learning support they had such as, one to one supervision with the registered provider and a named mentor to support them in their learning.

Non-Compliance Information

1.
There was one staff member in the service who had a police vetting record in place which was not translated.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The police vetting is now translated and is available on file in the service. The service will ensure all required police vetting is translated officially before staff start working directly with the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the translated police vetting was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)
There was an adequate number of staff working with the children throughout the day.

(2)
9.55 am
There were 76 children in the care of 18 staff.
1.15 pm
There were 74 children in the care of 14 staff.

There were three staff in the service who were employed under a community employment scheme who were also available to assist the qualified staff in the preschool rooms if required. The registered provider was also available to assist across the rooms if required.

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

The following observations reflect the children 's experience in the service as evidenced by speaking to the staff, observations made, and documents examined on the day of inspection.

(1)(a)

The three rooms observed on the day of inspection were resourced with appropriate toys and equipment to support the play and learning needs of the children attending the service. For example, in the baby room there was a large ball pool for babies to sit in. There was a wall mounted collage of various shapes and tactile toys for children to play with. There was a mirror at the children's level so they could look at themselves when they were playing on the floor.

There were two double buggies available for staff to bring the children to the outdoor area when required. Staff had made plastic bottles with glitter inside for babies to play with. Of note was a translation of frequently used words to communicate with a baby in the room. English was not this baby's first language. Staff were observed looking up different phrases to use when speaking to the child. The child was observed to react and smile when spoken to in their first language. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this helped the child settle in the service.

In the wobbler room there was a wooden play gym. There was a slide and a tunnel for them to climb through.

There was a large couch for staff and children to sit on while reading stories. The room was resourced with jigsaws, baby dolls, small world toys on open shelves which were accessible to the children.

The Toddler room provides direct access onto one of the three outdoor play spaces. Children in the Toddler room were suitably dressed for the wind and rain and brought out to play. They were well supervised and supported to enjoy the outdoor area using the play equipment and playing games with each other and staff. Staff were observed to be vigilant and attentive to children's needs, wiping noses regularly and comforting children who became upset or needed extra support to participate.

(1)(b)

Staff in the baby room were observed to be vigilant in picking up on cues for care. Babies who were upset were comforted. Babies who showed signs that they were tired had their nappies changed and were put to bed promptly.

Staff in the Toddler room were observed providing gentle and attentive care to the children using soft tones of voice and picking children up for comfort when they showed signs of upset. Staff members demonstrated knowledge of the children's likes, dislikes and support needs. They spoke knowledgeably of the children's wider families and lives outside the creche.

Children were provided with one-to-one care throughout the inspection as needed and were supported to ensure their full participation. Children's preference for particular staff members was respected with staff swapping roles to facilitate this at times such as nappy changing.

Children moved freely around the Toddler room choosing which activities they wanted to engage in. Children were free to choose whether to sit with staff for songs or stories or to continue to play independently. Any disputes that arose were handled sensitively with children supported to engage with each other positively.

Staff were observed to take children for a stroll around the service when they could benefit from some quiet time and individual attention. There were points of interest within the reception and corridors for children to engage with and chat about.

The service promoted healthy eating and had a healthy eating policy. All snacks and meals were prepared by a chef employed in the service. The dinner was served at mid-day and consisted of shepherd's pie and mixed vegetables. There was a plentiful supply and children who wanted more were given extra portions. The food provided was prepared and served to meet the stages of development of the children. For example, the food for younger children was a mashed/lumpy texture and the older children's dinner was served whole. Children under one were given prepared formula milk which was stored in the fridge in the baby room.

Staff in the toddler room ensured children had access to beakers of water and milk were given to drink with their dinner. The meals were served at child sized tables in the rooms. Staff sat with the children chatting to them and giving them assistance if required. Children in the baby room had bibs supplied to them and were fed by the staff. The inspector observed the staff established a calm atmosphere when feeding the children. They were sitting talking to them with calm music playing in the background.

Nappy changing was observed in the baby room. The nappy changing area was observed to be well organised with an openable window and hand washing facilities directly beside the two units available to the children. There was liquid soap, warm water to support hand washing and a foot pedal bin provided. The nappy changing procedure was displayed in the changing room. Staff were observed to wash their hands and wear gloves and aprons while changing the babies' nappies.

Children in the baby room were observed sleeping in the sleep room attached to the baby room. Sleep observations were carried out every 10 minutes and recorded on the handheld computer in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspector were knowledgeable of the need to observe and record the sleeping babies' colour, position, breathing every 10 minutes. Staff in the wobbler room were observed to stay with the children when they were sleeping.

Non-Compliance Information

1.

The light from the adjoining preschool room shone into the sleep room attached to the wobbler room. There were no blinds on the window to provide a dim light for the sleeping children.

2.

While staff in the Toddler room were attentive to children's needs for rest, their ability to provide a quiet environment for sleep was compromised by the limitations of the space available. Children in the Toddler room have access to an adjacent cot room with three cots on a need led basis. While this was observed to work well in the morning there came a point after lunch where many children showed signs of requiring sleep. The rest area within the toddler room was fitted with sleep mats and dimmed lighting and a staff member sat with six children who were trying to sleep. The remaining children were observed to be busy at play.

The noise and movement within the room disturbed children who got back up to return to play. As the space was limited this meant that they walked across each other's sleep mat disturbing others. Two children remained asleep but shortly afterward one of these also woke when a child banged a toy close by. This child had a total of 16 minutes sleep and showed significant signs of tiredness upon waking. Staff acknowledged that the facilities make it challenging to ensure children get adequate sleep at this point in the day. The management team had also identified these challenges and outlined to the inspectors their plans to extend the service to include a larger sleep facility. They have agreed to work on an interim solution while plans to extend are progressed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.
New blinds have been ordered for the sleep room to provide a dimly lit sleeping environment for the children in the wobbler room.
2.
The floor beds have been reconfigured in the sleep room. There are now four floor beds and one cot in the sleep room. This room allows children to enjoy uninterrupted sleep in a quiet environment with blinds to dim the light.

Supporting documentation submitted

1.
No evidence received.
2.
A photograph of the reconfigured sleep room consisting of four floor beds and one cot was received by the inspector. The manager has stated these measures are now in place and staff have seen improvements in the quality of the sleeping experiences of the children attending the toddler room.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

1.
There were 2 staff members whose Garda vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1.

Staff members whose Garda vetting disclosure were not dated within the previous 3 years been reapplied for by the registered provider.

Supporting documentation submitted

1.

Evidence of the application to renew Garda vetting for two staff was received by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The response once completed is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.