

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD015		
Name of Service:	Bumbles Bees Creche		
Address of Service:	Birch Close, Bellfield, Ferrybank, Co. Waterford		
Eircode:	X91 RW30		
Name of Registered Provider:	Laura McLoughlin		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	20/09/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM 45
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.		
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

Bumble Bees is a privately run service that first opened in June 2005. Bumble Bees is located in south Kilkenny in the Ferrybank suburb of Waterford city. The service operates from a purpose-built childcare facility in a residential area of Waterford City. The premises has two unconnected buildings one stand-alone pre-school and a second building that caters for five childcare rooms, a full catering kitchen, two sleeping rooms, sanitary accommodation, nappy changing facilities, a separate room for chemicals and cleaning agents and an office. The outdoor play area is safely secured adjacent to the service on the grounds of the premises. Opening hours are from 07:30hrs to 17:45hrs offering flexible full day, part time, and sessional places. The service participates in Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. The age range catered for in the service is for children aged 6 months to 6 years. A school age childcare programme is also offered for children aged between 5 and 12 years of age with transport from the local schools.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner. The service employs a full-time manager who is part of the staff compliment. There are a further 18 childcare workers employed to work directly with the children in the service as well as a part time chef.

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 focused on the following areas.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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 co-operation 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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider and named person who was able to deputise were present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

The staff files of 21 employees were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(a)(b) There were validated references for all employees kept in each staff members file.

(c) There were Garda vetting disclosures available for all 21 staff working in the service which had been re-vetted in the last 3 years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were available for four employees who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months.

(4)
There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5, 6 or 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the service, and ratios were maintained in excess of the recommended requirements for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

(2)
On the morning of the inspection there were 69 pre-school children directly supervised by 16 staff. The manager and registered provider was available to help out as required.

Baby room: There were 3 staff working directly with 6 children aged between 9 months and 15 months.

Toddler room: There were 2 staff working directly with 7 children aged between 15 months and 2 years of age.

Junior preschool room (nest): There were 3 staff working directly with 19 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 3 years of age.

Play group 1 room (first floor): There were 3 staff working directly with 12 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 3 years of age.

Senior toddler room (first floor): There were 2 staff working directly with 8 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.

The Hive senior pre-school (new building): There were 3 staff working directly with 17 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.

In the afternoon of the inspection there were 45 pre-school children directly supervised by 13 staff. The manager and registered provider were available to help out as required.

Baby room: There were 3 staff working directly with 6 children aged between 9 months and 15 months.

Toddler room: There were 2 staff working directly with 6 children aged between 15 months and 2 years of age.

Junior preschool room (nest): There were 3 staff working directly with 14 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 3 years of age.

Play group 1 room (first floor): There were 3 staff working directly with 12 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 3 years of age.

Senior toddler room (first floor): There were 2 staff working directly with 7 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.

The Hive senior pre-school (new building): School age children only.

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, or
 - (b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) On the day of the inspection there were six rooms in use for the care of pre-school children. The ground floor of the main building had three rooms, the baby room, the toddler room and junior pre-school (the nest). Upstairs on the first floor there were two childcare rooms senior toddlers and senior pre-school. Since the last inspection there was a new building added to the service called the hive. This building accommodated the older pre-school children attending for the second year of the ECCE scheme.

Each childcare room was well resourced with a rich toy environment of quality, age-appropriate furniture equipment and toys. Each room was set out to accommodate the needs of the staff and the age range of the children being cared for. It was evident from the quality and age suitability that much thought and imagination had gone into the sourcing and procurement of the furniture, equipment and toys. For example, in the junior preschool room (nest) there was an extensive imaginary play area featuring a shop and home/kitchen space with play items such as a washing machine, miniature microwave and kitchen utensils. A further addition to the service was the indoor/outdoor room opening from junior pre-school that stretched the length of the building and with a south facing aspect, was warm and cosy. This room had eight built in sensory baths with a variety of options for children such as moss/peat/sand/dried pasta.

The registered provider confirmed that this room was a great asset to the service especially when the weather was unfavourable for going outdoors. The sensory baths were observed to be well used.

(b) There were two dedicated sleep rooms on the premises, one upstairs for the toddlers and one downstairs for the babies that accommodated five cots. Since the last inspection the registered provider had invested in 10 quality floor beds for the toddler sleep room. This room doubled up as a sensory room when not being used as a sleep room. Since the last inspection there was newly installed sensory lighting in this room. Both sleep rooms were air-conditioned. Linen was laundered on the premises and stored in individually labelled units in the rooms as observed by the inspector. Set sleep times were arranged in the rooms for the 2 to 3 year olds. On the day it was observed that these children's rest needs were well met during a planned sleeping period when stackable beds were set up in their rooms. The remaining childcare rooms had soft couches and floor cushions with rugs in designated rest areas.

(3)
(a) The service provided a large child-centred play-based outdoor environment that was available and suitable for all the pre-school children attending the service to be outdoors together at any given time. The area was fully secured with high concrete walls separating the large outdoor space from the neighbouring residential area. The outdoor area had been sub divided into four/five separate play environments separated by picket fences and gates to enable staff and children to access the different areas.

There was an extensive soft matted area that had various fixed outdoor activity equipment that met the needs of the different age groups. The upper garden had artificial grass and the garden had been further subdivided to accommodate a forest area with an extensive mud kitchen. A graveled area had large tractor tyres surrounded and filled with gravel, children were observed enjoying using this area with spades and buckets.

There was a large, locked storage house for the outdoor toys and equipment and a sizable pagoda with timber decking. This structure offered shade and shelter for the children all year round. A further small decking area secured with banisters leading off the baby room extended into the larger play area and allowed for the babies to be outdoors. Some babies were observed to have siblings in the outdoor play area who requested the staff to bring their baby sibling out on to the decking in order to see and greet them.

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

A healthy eating policy and a weekly menu was available. The service supplied the main meal and snacks for children attending on a full day care basis. For children attending for the ECCE scheme, parents supplied the food for the mid-morning snack and parents also supplied the food for babies up to 15 months. The service had an additional supply of extra snacks and foods in the event that a child required extra food.

Bumble Bees employed a chef to prepare the main meals. On the day the main meal was fish fingers, beans and chips. The morning break consisted of fresh fruits (Kiwi and peaches) and rice crispy cakes. Breakfast was available to children from 07:30hrs to 08:45hrs the chef informed the inspector that a selection of cereals, toast and orange juice were available between these time. The service had been inspected by the Health Service Executive (HSE) Environmental Health Services on 23 October 2023.

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)
All 12 of the 19 staff available to work with the children in the service were currently First Aid Responder trained.

(2)

(a) There were first aid bags in each building and in the kitchen

(b) These first aid boxes were suitably equipped, well stocked and available at all times.

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) A recording system was provided to ensure a monthly record was maintained of fire drills as conducted and it was noted that the last fire drill took place on the premises on the 27 August 2024.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that fire equipment was last serviced in June 2024 and smoke alarms were last serviced on 5 September 2024.
- (4)
- The drawings and plans for the fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the notice board in the main lobby area of the centre. There were also plans for the fire evacuation procedures in each care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The service ensured that all children were appropriately supervised at all times throughout the inspection. All staff were suitably qualified, and the registered provider and the manager had over 19 years experience working directly with children. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The service had three access points for entry and exiting the building as follows.

The main front door, the side gate or nest gate and the main entrance into the new building called the hive.

There was a documented protocol for the nominated access points on the premises. The registered provider had issued all parents with a colour coded diagram and plan for each access point in the building. The collection time was observed at the nest gate for the junior ECCE programme. This was overseen by three staff.

The staff in each care room had a separate mobile phone for parents to WhatsApp them on arrival at the building at the nominated drop off or collection point. All children using the care rooms on the first floor were observed being assisted on the internal stairs with the staff supporting and encouraging use of the child height banister. Two staff members were observed supervising in the toddler sleep room. Child staff ratios were maintained in all the care rooms during the routine sleep times conducted.