

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD074		
Name of Service:	St. Brigid's Children's Centre		
Address of Service:	Powersfield, Hennessy's Road, Waterford City, Co. Waterford		
Eircode:	X91 FC42		
Name of Registered Provider:	Gerardine Lanigan		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	22/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM 7
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Centre, HSE Buildings, Cork Rd, Waterford City X91 VX09		
Inspection undertaken by:	A Bradshaw C Ryan		
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		

Description of service

St. Brigid's Children's Centre is a community childcare service and is part of the wider services of St. Brigid's Family and Resource Centre in Waterford city. The premises is built purposely, with six care rooms, a sensory room kitchen and sanitary areas. The ECCE room was not operating on the day of the inspection. The children's outdoor area is at the rear of the building. Five of the care rooms led directly to the outdoor area, each with an individually fenced space for their sole use, which is partially covered to allow for outdoor play in all weather. There is a large, grassed area for all children.

The centre is registered to care for up to 80 children aged from 1 to 6 years of age. The hours of operation are between 9:00 and 17:30.

The service also offers school-age care.

Staffing

The service employs 20 staff members, including the registered provider, an administrator, and a chef who do not work directly with the pre-school children. On the day of the inspection, seven staff members were working directly with the pre-children, and the person in charge was available for support if required.

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 areas of governance/ health, welfare, and development of the child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11(1)(2)(4) – Staffing Levels;

Regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child;

Regulation 20 -Facilities for Rest and Play;

Regulation 22 – Food and Drink;

Regulation 25 – First Aid;

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of Preschool Child.

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 registered provider, 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)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. There was a clear management structure with the staff names, positions and photographs displayed in the service.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed 20 staff files, including the registered provider, the manager, the administrator and the chef.

(a)(b) Validated references were available for review.

(c) Garda vetting was available for 20 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documents available demonstrated that police vetting was required for four staff; the inspector reviewed these.

(4)
On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved 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.

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)(2)

During the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 7 staff caring for 27 preschool children in the morning and 3 staff caring for 7 preschool children in the afternoon. The person in charge was available to offer support if required. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. The service employs an administer and a cook.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 12 children's enrolment forms completed by the parents were reviewed as part of the inspection process and were found to contain all the information required under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

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 19 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service consisted of six playrooms, all opening directly onto a large open hallway. Five of the rooms were used for preschool children, and the sixth room was the school-aged children's room. Each room was equipped with a wide variety of play materials, which were of good quality and suitable for the age and stage of development for the children. Open shelving allowed children to access toys and materials independently, and there was sufficient space for children to move around and play.

Toys and materials included kitchen/home corners, baskets of bricks, farm toys and dolls. The playrooms had personalised touches that included family photos, birthday walls, and individually named hooks for children to hang their coats and bags on. Throughout the rooms, activity trays were set up with a variety of sensory, tactile and messy play. Staff were observed inviting children to play at the tables.

The service had a designated outdoor play area for the children at the side and rear of the premises. This area was fully enclosed. There were grassy areas, concreted pathways and all-weather soft surfaces. Four of the rooms had direct access to the garden. These rooms had smaller fenced areas with a cover to allow children more opportunities for outdoor play. There were mud kitchens, planting areas, sand play, climbing frames, digging areas and ride-on toys and a small shed for storage. The children were observed to enjoy long periods in the outdoor area during the morning.

(b)

Each of the rooms had cosy/rest areas with sofas, soft mats and cushions set up if a child required a rest. There was a designated sleep room with cots and mattresses available as needed for children who wished to sleep.

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

Mid-morning snacks were supplied by parents and stored in fridges in the kitchen. The service employed a staff member who served the snacks to the children in the individual rooms. The snacks were served on plates. Children had access to water throughout the day. The service provided a second snack for children who attended on a part time or full-time basis. This was prepared fresh every day.

A 2-week menu plan was displayed for parents to view. Special dietary requirements, including allergies, were adhered to. There was a supply of additional food and snacks available in the kitchen at all times if a child was hungry, forgot their snack or wanted an alternative food to eat.

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 has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. Nine staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard.

(2)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were in each room and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position.

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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record of these was maintained digitally. The last fire drill was carried out on the 24th of June 2025.
 - (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarms. The maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on 17th September 2024 and on the smoke alarms on 2nd May 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each care room and the main hallways.