

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH053			
Name of Service:	Grovelands Childcare Ltd			
Address of Service:	The Weir, Market Point, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath			
Eircode:	N91 TX2C			
Name of Registered Provider:	Regina Bushell			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	19/07/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	17
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.			
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C. O'Connor Hughes			
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

The service is registered as a full day care service. The service is open from Monday to Friday. A service is provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The Early Years' Service is located over a number of adapted apartments on the ground floor of an apartment block. Five pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a breakout room, a kitchen, office and a reception area are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is located in an urban setting in a residential area in the town of Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Staffing

There were fourteen adults present on 19 July 2024 including the designated person in charge, supervisor and cook. A student was present on work experience. The registered provider who does not work directly with children was not present. The operations manager attended the closing meeting remotely.

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 scope of the inspection included the Bluebell, Mulberry and Sycamore rooms as these were the only pre-school rooms in operation on 19 July 2024.

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 co-operation of the person in charge, supervisor, 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 designated person in charge and the centre supervisor were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge and the centre supervisor were present during the inspection.

Twenty-one files including the student and the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the files reviewed.

(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in respect of the files reviewed.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of six staff members who lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children as part of the adult to child ratio held qualifications at levels 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or departmental letters of temporary qualification recognition for the summer period.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were seventeen pre-school children and eleven school age children attending the service supervised directly by eleven adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

(1)(a)

Rooms: Bluebell, Mulberry and Sycamore

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development.

Meals and snacks were freshly prepared on site for the children by a cook employed daily. A menu plan was available. The mid-morning snack consisted of pancakes, fruit, brioche and water to drink. The main meal consisted of spaghetti bolognese. Children were encouraged to self-serve their main meal in the Sycamore room. Staff members sat with children and assisted them as required in the Bluebell and Mulberry rooms. Conversations and interactions were noted between staff and children during the main meal. Dietary requirements were catered for with additional portions and food available in the service.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before meals and went to the toilet.

Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as required. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Individual needs led sleep was in operation if a child wanted to rest or sleep.

Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities.

A digital system was used to record details relating to each child's daily activities including feeding, sleeping, nappy changing, events and activities. This information was available in real time for parents to review.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for the children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals, and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters. Children's artwork was noted and paper, crayons, paint and a variety of open-ended art materials

were in plentiful supply. Children enjoyed moving freely from one play experience to the next in the indoor and outdoor environments.

Evidence indicated that the curriculum planning that supported the Early Childhood Curriculum framework was implemented.

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.

(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)

Adequate and suitable indoor and outdoor facilities were provided on the premises.

(b)

A separate sleep room was available equipped with eight cots. All cots had wheels to aid a prompt evacuation in the event of a fire in the premises. Low level beds were in place for children over the age of two who required rest or sleep during the day. Soft furnishings provided suitable relaxation facilities in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

A large garden area was located to the rear of the service. The perimeter was secured by a high-level fence, foliage and gates. The garden has been extensively renovated since the last inspection on 16 August 2022. The area now has an all-weather surface and a segregated area for younger children to play. A small, sheltered play area was noted. The outdoor play area was equipped with age and stage appropriate bikes, trikes, climb and slide units, goal posts and covered sand trays.

The 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

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment was available in the pre-school rooms.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Indoor and outdoor safety checklists were in place.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas.

Children were observed to wash their hands before meals and after using the toilet. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school rooms.

Mechanical ventilation was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. The administration of medication documentation was available and reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

A digital sleep log was in place indicating that the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was monitored every ten minutes. The temperature of the sleep rooms was monitored by staff. The temperature recorded was 20°Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed and a fire assembly point was noted to the rear of the premises.

Outing:

A risk assessment and checklist were available and reviewed in respect of the annual outing from the service.

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.

(2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.

(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

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service. The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)

Four adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). The roster indicated that FAR cover was provided during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in various locations throughout the premises.

(b)

A first aid box was readily available to children in the pre-school 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 record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 8 July 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The smoke alarms were serviced in December 2023. The firefighting equipment was serviced in January 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.