

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH072
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Name of Service:	Jolly Mariner Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Brick Island, Abbey Road, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 E008
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sean Quilty
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/08/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	22
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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:	C.O' Connor Hughes & N.Mc Endoo
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
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Description of service

This community service provides a full day care, part time and sessional service. The service is open from 08:30 to 18:00 Monday to Friday. The service is part of a multiple and operated by Athlone Community Services Council CLG.

The Early years' service is located to the ground floor of an adapted residential building. The service consists of three pre-school rooms, namely the wobbler/ toddler room, junior pre-school room and the senior pre-school room. A sleep room, an office, a small kitchen and staff room are provided. Outdoor play areas are located at the rear of the service. The service is situated in Athlone town, Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

The designated person in charge and nine staff members were present on the 29 August 2023 and working directly with children. A relief staff member and the childcare manager arrived at the service shortly after the inspectors' arrival. One adult was employed under the Community Employment scheme and an office administrator was present. The childcare manager did not stay for the inspection.

The registered provider does not work directly with children.

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.

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 designated 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

The files of thirteen staff members were reviewed and the following was noted.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available from past employers and a reputable source in respect of all adults.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of all adults.

(d)

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

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of adults.

(4)

Adults held a major award at Level 5 to 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 thirty-three children attending the service supervised directly by ten adults including the designated person in charge.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

(1)

A sampling process has been used and eleven child records were inspected. Information relating to (a)(b)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parental information was available in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g) and shared with parents via a parent handbook at the start of the pre-school term.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

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)

Wobbler /Toddler Room

Some young children were settling in on the day of the inspection. The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routine. Staff gave comfort and reassurance to children settling into the service and adapting to their new environment. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and sat talking with children at mealtimes. Bibs were worn to protect children's clothes. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required.

Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Children slept in a in a restful atmosphere in the sleep room and were physically checked by the staff member every 10 minutes.

The toddler room was bright and colourful with children's artwork and posters displayed in the room.

Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to explore their environment and rest on the soft matting provided.

Junior pre-school room

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before snack and mealtime. Children went to the toilet independently supervised by staff. Children enjoyed play experiences indoors including table-top activities and a water play activity. Aprons were provided to protect children's clothes for the water play. Children were observed to play freely in the pre-school room. Staff sat with children talking to and assisting them with the tabletop activity.

The colourful pre-school room was laid out with low level tables and chairs. Materials were available to children on low level shelving that included bricks, blocks, art and craft supplies, animals, jigsaws, dolls and play kitchen utensils. A kitchen, dolls play area, arts easel and cosy rest area was noted. Children's artwork was displayed.

Senior pre-school room

Children were independent and enjoyed the various play opportunities and extended outdoor play time supervised by staff. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children's learning needs was available in the pre-school room. Artwork and children's work displays including "our future" were noted on the walls and doors in the pre-school room. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Transitions were smooth as staff gave notice as to a change in activity from outdoor to the indoor environment. Health care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition.

The learning journal for the pre-school room incorporating the numerous children's play activities carried on during the pre-school term was available for review. A child's learning journal was reviewed depicting their play and work activities. This journal is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. Child developmental observations are shared with parents on a regular basis.

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

The service worked in partnership with parents and guardians in the following ways: a verbal handover was given on collection to parents, via a parent notice board displayed at the entrance to the service and a parent handbook. Children have a shared diary with the service and parents via an electronic device outlining their daily routine including feeding, sleeping, and nappy changing.

The designated person in charge stated the parental participation has been encouraged to allow parents to come into the pre-school rooms and discuss their child's day with the relevant staff member.

The service had made links to the community as the children from the senior pre-school room had visited the fire station and a local green area for a picnic. The local garda had visited the children recently in the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

Junior Pre-school room

1. A child's nonverbal cues indicating that they were tired and required sleep was not noticed by staff at the main mealtime. The child was observed to rub their eyes continually, close their eyes and go to sleep whilst sitting on the chair at the table. Upon request of the inspector the child was moved and put down to sleep on a low-level bed by staff.
2. The layout of the junior pre-school room required further review to allow for child led and imaginative play.
3. The programme of activities and its implementation required review to accommodate the varying age range and developmental needs of the children attending the junior pre-school room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

19 (1)(a)

1. Staff will undergo a comprehensive training module focusing on the identification and interpretation of children's nonverbal cues, particularly signs of tiredness. Timeframe 3 October 2023.
2. The training will incorporate real-life scenarios, visual aids, and interactive sessions to enhance understanding and retention.
3. Post-training assessments will be conducted to ensure staff competency in recognizing and addressing children's nonverbal cues.
4. The room leader will implement a systematic and structured routine for monitoring each child's behaviour and well-being during mealtimes.
5. Regular debriefing sessions will be held post-mealtimes to discuss observations and immediate actions taken.

6. A designated member of staff will be assigned with the specific responsibility of observing and addressing the immediate needs of children during mealtimes.

7. The designated observer will be equipped with immediate response strategies and will have the authority to make real-time decisions to address children's needs.

Preventive Action

Continuous Learning and Development:

1. Regularly update and refresh staff training modules to incorporate the latest research and best practices in child behaviour and needs. Timeframe 3 October 2023.
2. Conduct periodic refresher courses and workshops to reinforce knowledge and skills.
3. Develop and maintain a comprehensive checklist of common nonverbal cues and signs of tiredness for staff reference. Timeframe 5 October 2023.
4. The checklist will be readily accessible and will serve as a quick reference guide for staff during their interactions with children. Timeframe 5 October 2023.

19(1)(a)

Corrective Action

2.
 1. Conduct a comprehensive review of the current room layout and identify areas for improvement.
 2. Reorganize the room to create more open spaces and include diverse play areas that encourage imaginative play.
 3. Involve staff and, where appropriate, children in suggesting ideas for room layout and play areas.

Preventive Action

- 1.Regularly review and update the room layout to accommodate the evolving needs and interests of the children.
- 2.Seek feedback from children and staff on the effectiveness of the room layout and make adjustments as needed.
- 3.Incorporate elements that foster child-led and imaginative play in the room design.

19(1)(a)

Corrective Action

- 3.
1. Review the current programme of activities and assess its suitability for the diverse age range and developmental needs of the children.
2. Develop a more flexible and inclusive programme that caters to individual needs and promotes holistic development.

Preventive Action

1. Continuously assess and adapt the programme of activities based on children's developmental progress and changing interests.
2. Encourage staff to observe children's responses to activities and suggest modifications to better suit their needs.
3. Foster an inclusive environment where every child's needs are recognized and addressed through tailored activities.

Monitoring and Evaluation:

1. Regularly monitor the implementation of corrective and preventive actions.
2. Evaluate the effectiveness of the actions taken through feedback from staff, children and parents.

Timeline:

Immediate implementation of corrective actions, with a review after one month.

Preventive actions to be ongoing with regular reviews every three months.

Responsibility:

The Centre Manager will oversee the implementation of the CAPA.

All staff members are responsible for adhering to the corrective and preventive measures outlined in the CAPA.

Documentation:

Maintain detailed records of all actions taken, including training sessions, room layout changes, and programme modifications.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the regulatory requirement. The practices stated by the manager will be assessed on the next TUSLA inspection.

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, or

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room was available connected to the toddler room. Five cots including a fire evacuation cot were available for children to sleep in. A separate area was available for children to sleep on low level beds in the junior pre-school room. Suitable cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play areas for the toddlers and pre-school children were safe and secure surrounded by a high wall. A sheltered perspex awning was in place leading out of the pre-school rooms onto the outdoor play area. Natural trees and flowers were noted. An absorbent surface was in place. Toys and equipment include a mud kitchen, art boards, balancing bicycles, play construction bricks, a slide and playhouse. All children had the opportunity for outdoor play during the inspection.

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 menu plan was in place depicting the main meals given to children on a daily basis. The service provides breakfast and the main meal to children attending on a full day care basis. At 10:25 children enjoyed healthy snacks consisting of fruit, yoghurt, vegetables and sandwiches with water to drink.

The meals are prepared in the main kitchen of a sister service located nearby and transported correctly to this service. At 13:05 chicken casserole with vegetables, rice and potato was served to children. A choice of water or milk was offered to the children.

Parents provide snacks and drinks for the children attending on a full day care and sessional basis.

Snacks are stored in the fridge. The temperature of the fridge is recorded on daily basis.

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. Safety checklists were available for review.

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. The water temperature at the wash hand basins was recorded at 33 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

Soothers were individually labelled and stored hygienically in the wobbler /toddler room.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medicine was given at the time of the inspection. A temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. The medication was stored correctly in the service. Emergency care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition.

Safe Sleep:

Physical checks were carried out on sleeping children in the toddler room. A sleep log was recorded noting the colour, position and breathing of the sleeping child. The temperature of the room was recorded via a wall mounted thermometer at 19 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were free from obstruction. Upon discussion the staff member was familiar with the fire evacuation procedures in the service.

Outing:

Outings checklists were available for outings that had taken place from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

A trailing cable from a laptop was noted in the senior pre-school room which posed a potential risk of injury to a child. Upon the request of the Inspector the designated person in charge took a corrective action and secured the cable out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

Correct infection control procedures were not in place for cleaning up a spillage of water in the junior pre-school room. A staff member was observed to use a large cloth towel to mop up the extra water from the floor after the water play activity was completed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

Immediate Rectification

Secure any trailing cables immediately and ensure they are out of reach of children.

Conduct a thorough safety inspection of the room to identify and rectify any similar hazards.

Staff Training:

Provide additional training to staff on identifying and mitigating potential safety hazards within the classroom.

Emphasize the importance of maintaining a clutter-free and safe environment for children.

Preventive Action

Enforce strict safety protocols for the use and storage of electronic devices and cables.

Ensure all staff are familiar with and adhere to the safety protocols.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

Immediate Retraining:

Retrain the concerned staff member on the correct procedures for cleaning up spillages, emphasizing the risks associated with using towels.

Reinforce the importance of using appropriate cleaning materials, such as disposable paper towels and mops, along with disinfectant cleaners.

Remind all staff members of the availability and location of suitable cleaning materials and equipment. Refresh staff training on spillages.

Preventive Action

Conduct periodic refresher training sessions on infection control procedures to ensure staff maintain competency.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector met the regulatory requirement. The practices stated by the manager will be assessed on the next TUSLA inspection.

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)
Three adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
First Aid boxes were available in the pre-school rooms.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible 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 fire fighting 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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 4 July 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 2 December 2022 and 21 February 2023 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position 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. The expiry date noted was 29 February 2024.