

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LS002		
Name of Service:	Quinagh Creche and Montessori School		
Address of Service:	34 Heatherhill, Graiguecullen, Carlow, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R93 AW64		
Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Fennelly, Laura Ralph		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	02/08/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM 22
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by independent providers. The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Four pre-school rooms, a kitchen, a dining area, a reception area, a staff room, a cot room and a sleep room are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Carlow in Graiguecullen, County Laois.

Staffing

One of the registered providers and four other staff members were present during the inspection. The second registered provider was not present during the inspection. All adults working directly with children held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Additional Information

- An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers on 11 August 2023 in respect of: Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, General Safety.
- The registered providers provided an immediate response outlining the corrective actions taken. The response was accepted and acknowledged by Tusla on 14 August 2023.

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.

(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)

One of the registered providers and a person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

One of the registered providers was present for the duration of the inspection.

Six staff files 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 staff members.

(b)

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

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c) were carried out by the registered providers prior to the employment of staff in the service.

(4)

All staff members held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(d) were not carried out by the registered providers prior to the employment of staff in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

Police vetting is in place in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months. (Police vetting verification included)

(3)

Checks on the vetting folders have taken place to ensure all vetting is available.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 in the playroom room 1, the ECCE room 3 and the Montessori room 4.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained during the inspection in the playgroup/ toddler room 2 where two adults were required to care for the seven children in attendance.
The registered provider was unable to act as the required second staff member as she carried out roles relating to the preparation and serving of all meals and snacks, room cover for nappy changing, answering the front door and telephone, supervision of children using the toilet independently, carrying out physical checks on sleeping children and nappy changing for all other rooms. See table below.

Pre-School Room	Number of staff present	Number of staff required	Number of Children - 7

Playgroup/ toddler room 2	1	2	7 children attending on a PT/FDC basis. 3 aged 1-2 years and 4 aged 2-3 years.
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(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was not maintained at all times during the inspection. There were 22 children attending the service being supervised directly by the registered provider and one other adult during the period of 12:40 – 13:40 when three staff members left the premises and went on their lunch break. See table below.

Pre-School Rooms

Pre-School Rooms	Number of staff present	Number of staff required	Number of Children - 22
Playgroup/ toddler room 2	0	2	7 children: 3 aged 1-2 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. 4 aged 2-3 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. All sleeping
Playroom room 1	0	1	3 children aged 1-2 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. All sleeping
ECCE room 3	1	1	5 children aged 3-6 years attending on a PT/FDC basis. 1 sleeping
Montessori room 4	1	1	7 children aged 3-6 years attending on a PT/FDC basis.

(8)(a)
A second adult was not available on the premises between the hours of 08:00 and 09:00.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(2) and (8)(a)

We have reviewed the staff rota and roster. We were understaffed on the day.

This has been corrected and enough staff are in the service each day to cover breaks, nappy changing, lunchtimes and the hours of operation. (Roster included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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)
In a review of thirteen child records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (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 Regulation 16 (1)(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

Information for parents was available in a parent handbook prior to commencement in the service in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

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)

All meals and snacks were prepared fresh by the registered provider. A hot meal consisting of a shepherd's pie with minced beef, carrots, onions and mashed potato was served to the children at 12:00. Children went to the toilet independently. Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting and on return from outdoor play.

Children made choices as to what they played with and what activity to participate in. The pre-school rooms were laid out with low level tables and chairs. Materials were accessible to children on low level wooden shelving and included books, jigsaws, bricks, blocks, dolls, prams, arts and crafts and fine motor skill toys. Children enjoyed arts and crafts, tabletop activities, story time and outdoor play during the inspection.

Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Positive interactions were observed between staff and children. Eye contact was maintained, soft language tones were used and positive praise given to children on the completion of activities. Staff were familiar with children and their personalities. Staff worked in partnership with parents and a verbal handover was provided to parents at collection time.

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)

Play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate cot room for children under the age of two and equipped with eight standard cots was available in the service. A separate sleep room equipped with seven low level beds were available in the service for any child over

the age of two years who required rest or sleep. A unit consisting of vinyl covered square pieces for rest purposes was stored on the main corridor.

(3) (a)

Outdoor play areas were available to the rear of the service. Concrete and artificial grass areas were in place equipped with a crawl tunnel and a selection of playhouses to support physical and imaginative play.

Two child sized sheltered areas were located to the rear of the service and equipped with benches, low level slides, rockers and a selection of bikes and trikes. A high-level concrete wall secured the rear of the outdoor area.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. In the cot room one of the eight mattresses in use was stained and required replacement.
2. In the cot room a waterproof covering was not in place on any of the eight mattresses in use.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

1 and 2

All mattresses have been disposed of and eight new waterproof mattresses and covers have been purchased and put in place in the cot room. (Photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 main entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Blind cords were secured appropriately throughout the premises.

Infection Control:

Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm running water, liquid soap and hand towel dispensers were available in the sanitary accommodation. Openable windows were provided in the sanitary accommodation and mechanical ventilation was provided in the nappy changing area. Foot operated pedal bins were available in some of the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Sleeping children were physically checked every ten minutes by a staff member.

Fire Safety:

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

Outing:

The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The highchair harnesses were not used by staff to maintain children's safety when using highchairs at mealtimes.
2. The plastic coating on the low-level chairs in the playroom was peeling away which posed a potential safety risk to the young children in attendance if the plastic covering was ingested by them.

Infection Control:

1. The registered provider who prepared all meals and snacks was observed to carry out nappy changing which presented as a potential cross contamination risk.

- Foot operated pedal bins were not available in some of the pre-school rooms and in the associated sanitary accommodation and nappy changing area for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Fire Safety:

1. Servicing of the fire detection system had not taken place to ensure that the system was operational in the event of a fire in the premises. This non-compliance was previously noted on the last inspection 30 June 2021. The registered providers had the fire detection system serviced post inspection on 9 August 2023.
2. Monthly fire drills were not carried out with only one fire drill being conducted in the premises to date in 2023. The lack of regular fire drill practice may impede the prompt evacuation of children in the event of a fire in the premises.
3. Multiple keys were in place at the two emergency exit doors, the keys were not labelled to indicate which keys opened the emergency exit doors which may impede the prompt evacuation of children in the event of a fire in the premises.

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers on 11 August 2023 in respect of: Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, General Safety points 2 and 3. The registered providers provided an immediate response outlining the corrective actions taken.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- 1
All staff were reminded that children must be always strapped in when using highchairs.
- 2
A new table and four chairs were purchased and the old ones were removed. (Photograph included)

Infection Control:

- 1
We have now made sure that a separate staff member changes nappies that is not in contact with food.
- 2
All bins have been changed to new foot pedal bins and the nappy bin was replaced with a pedal bin. (Photograph included)

Fire Safety:

- 1

Following the inspection, the fire detection system was serviced (Certificate included)

2

Fire drills had fallen behind and the situation has been amended. Many fire drills have been carried out since the inspection and monthly drills are scheduled. (Photograph included)

3

All keys have labels attached now. (Photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.

(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 nominated 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 inspector completed the visitor log on arrival.

(4)

The visitor log contained entries dating back to July 2022 indicating that it 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)

Two staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were rostered to be available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in the office with signage indicating its location displayed in the main entrance hall.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

The first aid box was not equipped in line with TUSLA Quality Framework document checklist for first aid boxes and did not contain the following items in sufficient quantity:

- A paramedic shears.
- A pocket face mask.
- Eye pads.

- Wipes/ cleaning solution.
- Wound dressings (medium, large and extra-large)

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

The first aid box has been restocked with the items that were missing. (Photograph included)

A paramedic shears.

A pocket face mask.

Eye pads.

Wipes/ cleaning solution.

Wound dressings (medium, large and extra-large)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 written record for the completed fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 10 February 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The firefighting equipment was serviced in November 2022. The smoke alarms were last serviced in July 2021.

(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 and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.