

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022LH002
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Dun Dealgan Childcare
-------------------------	-----------------------

Address of Service:	13 Demesne Road, Dundalk, Co. Louth
----------------------------	-------------------------------------

Eircode:	A91 E516
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Irenaeus McCaffrey
-------------------------------------	--------------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	18/12/2023
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child Wellbeing Centre Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Flood & S. Skinnader
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

Dun Dealgan Childcare is a privately operated service that provides full day, part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 2-6 years. The service operates from 8:00 - 18:00 Monday- Friday and caters for a maximum of 39 pre-school children.

The service is located in a purposely renovated building in a residential area of Dundalk, Co. Louth. The premises consists of 3 playrooms, each with adjoining sanitary accommodation. A kitchenette, small office area and staff toilet are located off the hallway. A small enclosed outdoor area is available to the front of the building

Staffing

The service employs 10 childcare staff including the registered provider and the designated person in charge who work directly with the pre-school children attending the service. Two additional adults are also employed in the service and are engaged in cleaning and catering duties for the preschool service.

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 an unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11, 19,23, 27 and 32; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 30. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

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

This inspection was carried out following receipt of unsolicited information by the Feedback and Concerns department.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service at 11:00.

(2) Following a service file review and a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed to the inspectors that there were three new staff members present in the service since the last inspection.

There were 3 new staff files presented for inspection and 1 staff file from the previous inspection was also reviewed:

(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for the 3 new members of staff.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda vetting disclosure was available the 3 new staff members.

(d) International police vetting from 2 jurisdictions was available for 1 staff member.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the 3 new members of staff, who work directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required level 5 Childcare Qualification

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (d) An official translation for one of the international police vetting's was not available for inspection. International police vetting which was outstanding for 1 member of staff from the last inspection was available, however this version was unacceptable.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (d)

The staff member is applying for an English version of her international police vetting, it will be submitted to the Creche upon receipt.

Regarding international police vetting for the second employee, she too will also re-apply to the correct authority in the UK and provide it to the service once received.

The registered provider will forward these clearances upon receipt to the office of the early years' inspectorate.

A checklist will be put in place to ensure police clearances are received in a timely manner.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. However as documentary evidence of the required international police vetting and official translations have not been received to date the non-compliances have not been addressed.

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) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The following adult: child ratios were observed in the three care rooms when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service:

The Discovery Room: There were 8 preschool children (aged 3 years) attending this room with 2 childcare staff.

The Cherry Blossom Room: There were 8 preschool children (aged 2-3 years) attending this room with 2 childcare staff members.

The Aqua Room: There were 12 preschool children (aged 3-4 years) attending this room with 3 childcare staff members.

Two additional adults, which included the designated person in charge were also present in the service and provided assistance in the care rooms during staff break times and as if additional supports were required. A 3rd staff member was present in the kitchen.

(8)(a) Following a review of the available documentation e.g., staff rotas and children’s attendance records this information demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that there were at least 2 adults 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,

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

There were 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection: namely The Discovery Room, The Cherry Blossom Room and The Aqua Room.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis; for example hands were washed before snack times, after messy play and noses were cleaned throughout the day.
- Children who were toilet trained were facilitated to use the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by the staff members, and assistance when required.
- Nappy changes were carried out as required with good interactions observed.
- The children had a change of environment to the outdoor area and were dressed appropriately for going outside.
- Although no child was observed to sleep, the staff informed the inspectors that day beds were available as required. The children were observed to access the soft seating area to look at books.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults throughout the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner.

- A key worker system was in operation in the service which promoted the development of positive and secure relationships.
- Individual plans for children who required additional supports in the service were available and were being implemented e.g., visual aids, flash cards, and when questioned the staff were also able to discuss how strategies are reviewed and when identified as not working alternative strategies were used.
- Parents and guardians were informally communicated with at drop off and collection times. The inspector also observed the staff in The Discovery Room discussing an incident with a parent and completing an accident and incident form. The staff also informed the inspectors that that most communication with parents is carried out through an electronic interlinked application set up between the service and the parents. Information pertaining to the children's care needs, activities, learning stories and photographs are shared with parents through this method.

Physical and material environment

- Child sized furniture and equipment was in use throughout the service. Rest areas were available, which included soft seating, mats and cushions, so the children could take a break from an activity or sit and read a book if they choose to.
- In each of the care rooms there was a variety of play materials and equipment. The equipment was suited to the ages and stages of development of the children present and also promoted many areas of child development. The equipment was arranged and displayed on low level open shelving which facilitated the children to select and replace their chosen toys of interest.

Programme of activities and its implementation

- The children attending each of the care rooms were observed to engage in a variety of activities throughout the sessions e.g., tabletop activities, story time, free play, sensory play, art activities, and music and singing time.
- The staff were observed to sit at the tables or on the floor with the children and to actively support and encourage each child to take part in the activity. In addition, in the Aqua room story time was supported with a visual story board which included visual characters from the story.
- A daily routine was also on display in the rooms which included a photographic and written routine. The staff reported that curriculum was based on the children's continuous emerging interests.

- There was evidence of the children’s artwork on display in each of the care rooms e.g. “I’m a little snowman”, snowflakes, candy canes, Santa Claus painted paper plates, “Ho Ho Ho Merry Christmas” handprints.

(2) The use of corporal punishment was not observed during the inspection. The Behavioural Management Policy for the service also stated that “corporal punishment was not to be used “and the staff were familiar with the policy. The person in charge and staff also informed the inspectors that all staff had recently completed a behaviour management training course.

(3) Soft tones and positive language were observed in interactions between the children and staff. Minor behavioural issues were addressed and not allowed to escalate with staff positively engaging with the children by saying “use your words please...he can understand your words.” Clear instructions were given to children to support transitions between activities, outdoor play and when meeting care needs. Children who did not wish to engage in an activity were supported and facilitated in this choice.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All designated emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- No trailing wires or leads were visible during the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Up to date documented risk assessments were on display in each of the care rooms.
- The outdoor area, observed in use was gated, fenced and secured. The person in charge advised the inspectors that a 2nd outdoor area to the front of the building is currently not in use and under construction.

Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service. The following observations were made:

General Safety:

1. In the care rooms there were unprotected sharp corners on some of the low shelving units and tables.
This is a safety risk.
2. In the Aqua Room the corners of the floor mat were curling upward creating a potential trip hazard.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The unprotected sharp corners on some of the low shelving units and tables have been covered.
Monthly risk assessments will be carried out to make sure that corners are protected from sharp edges at all times.
2. In the Aqua Room the mat with curled upward edges creating a trip hazard has been removed and disposed of.
Monthly risk assessments will be carried out to make sure that there are no trip hazards in the rooms.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. Based on the information submitted the non-compliances have been addressed, however implementation and sustainment of the corrective actions detailed will require assessment at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

Adequate supervision was observed throughout the inspection. For example; when the children were observed going to and from the outdoor area, during toileting and nappy changing. Children who required additional supports when attending the service were supervised and appropriate strategies were observed being implemented in each of the care rooms.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*
- (4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,*
- the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) Following a review of the children's attendance records and observations made during the inspection, there was inadequate clear floor space for the number of children attending the service.
- A total floor space of 32.5m² was available in the Aqua Preschool room which provides sufficient space to cater for a maximum of 17 pre-school children aged 3-6 years who can attend for sessional care at any one time.
- However, on the day of the inspection there were 14 preschool children in attendance in the Aqua room at 13:20. An additional 8 children were due to attend the school aged service in the same room leaving a total of 22 children attending this room for a period of time. This was also confirmed by the designated person in charge and staff.

In addition, following a review of attendance records for the service for 12/12/2023, which included the arrival and departure times for the preschool and school aged children, 10 preschool children were documented at 15:30 as being in attendance in the Aqua room with an additional 11 children attending the school aged service also present in the same room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) In the Aqua Preschool room, the number of children attending the afterschool will be reviewed in line with Preschool regulations and minimum space requirements.

The registered provider will ensure this is compliant by checking each month to make sure we are in adherence to the regulations.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance. Based on the information submitted the non-compliance has been addressed, however implementation and sustainment of the corrective actions detailed will require assessment at the next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) A complaints policy was available for inspection. When questioned staff were familiar with the policy and demonstrated an understanding of their role and responsibility in relation to the implementation of the complaints policy.

(2)&(3) On review of documentation received on the day of the inspection and subsequent information submitted to the inspectorate by the registered provider, all complaints in the service have been addressed in accordance with the services Complaints policy.