

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2024CC003 |
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| Name of Service: | Cherryblossoms Creche Kanturk |
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| Address of Service: | Church Street, Kanturk, Co. Cork |
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| Eircode: | P51 F654 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Christina Dunstan |
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| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| Date(s) of Inspection: | 10/07/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 22 | PM | N/A |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork. |
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| Inspection undertaken by: | F. Collins |
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| Title: | Early Years Inspector |
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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).

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| Conditions if applicable | N/A |
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Description of service

Cherryblossoms Creche Kanturk is a new service operating since the end of April 2024. The service is operating out of the old Convent of Mercy primary school building located beside the Catholic Church in Kanturk.

The service is operating from 07.00 to 18.30 hours daily and can cater for up to 72 children in full day care, part-time day care and sessional care provision.

The service operates the early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year and is registered to provide school aged childcare.

The premises is the old primary school that has been converted into a pre-school service, currently accommodating 4 care rooms. The service has additional space for a sleep room, toilets, nappy changing rooms an office and kitchen, a staff room and a large hall where the children can play in wet or inclement weather.

Staffing

There are currently 23 named staff who may work in the service. This includes staff for the office and staff whose sole duty is in the preparation and serving of food.

The registered provider is named as the person in charge of the 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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation 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, 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 service had a designated person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. The staff were aware of who was in charge.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises at all times during the operation of the service on the day of inspection.
- (2)
- Twenty-three adults work in the service, all 23 adult files were assessed for completeness.
- (a) Of the 46 references required 25 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 46 references required 9 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for 21 of the 23 adults who work in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for one staff member, requiring services to renew staff Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was available and translated where required for four staff who work in the service and have access to children.
- (4) Sixteen adults held a qualification from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework and one adult held a temporary letter of equivalence for their qualification to be equal to a level 5 qualification for the summer months.

Non-Compliance Information

- (9) (2) (a) & (b) Of the 46 references required 12 were not available or were available and had not been validated by the registered provider. Not receiving or validating references may allow for staff who are not suitable to care for children have access to them.
- (c) Garda Vetting was not available for two adults caring for children in the service. An immediate action notice was issued to the service on 11.07.2024 in relation to allowing staff who were not Garda Vetted have access to the children. Not adequately vetting staff may allow staff who are not suitable have access to the children.

(d) The requirement for police vetting could not be determined for 12 staff where their curriculum vitae was either not available or inadequate. Not ensuring staff are appropriately vetted may allow for staff who are inappropriate have access to the children.

(4) The three adults caring for the children attending summer camp, a mix of five school aged children and three pre-school children, on the day of inspection did not hold a relevant qualification in childcare. Not holding a relevant qualification may hinder the appropriate care delivered to the pre-school children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a) & (b) Twelve outstanding references have been received, all references have been validated. The service has put a system in place to track the mandatory requirements for all staff that are employed into the future.

(c) Two Garda vetting disclosures have been received. The system to track the requirements for all staff will identify Garda vetting requirements.

(d) Police vetting was received for one of the staff where their curriculum vitae, which was not previously available, indicated the need for police vetting.

(4) The registered provider has indicated on the corrective and preventive action form that qualified staff will care for the pre-school children at all times in all areas of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a) & (b) Twelve references have been received.

(c) Two Garda Vetting disclosures have been received.

(d) One police vetting disclosure has been received.

Summary Comment

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 11.07.2024 for having two staff onsite and working with children who were not Garda Vetted. The registered provider replied by return on 11.07.2024 indicating that both staff had been removed from the roster, Garda Vetting had been applied for and evidence of the updated rosters have been received.

Following the response from the Immediate Action Notice and following the corrective and preventive action process the requirements for this Regulation have been met. The qualifications will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate adults available to care for the children attending at all times.

(2) There were four children attending the wobbler/toddler room, all four were aged between 2-3 years and were being cared for by two staff. The staff provided cover for each other's breaks.

There were four children attending the Baby/wobbler room and these were cared for by two staff members.

There were 11 children being cared for by three staff members in the full day care room, (first room at the top of the stairs) these children were aged from 2-4 years.

There were three staff members working with the five school aged care children and three pre-school children attending the afterschool room/summer camp.

The staffing on the day of inspection allowed for staff to take breaks.

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

Basic Needs:

- The morning snacks on the day of inspection were brought in from home and appeared to fulfil healthy eating guidelines, they consisted of fruit, sandwiches, yogurts and drinks of water.
- Dinner on the day of inspection was ham, mash potatoes, carrots and broccoli with gravy. Assistance was given to the children in the Baby/wobbler and wobbler/toddler rooms as required with the babies' spoon fed and the younger toddlers assisted with eating as needed. A staff member sat with the children during meal and snack times. Appropriate crockery and cutlery were used.
- Staff supported the children with toileting. Nappies were changed as required and on routine.
- Children were reminded to wash hands and helped when needed, especially with the younger age group.
- Sleep was facilitated throughout the day in the downstairs sleep room with each child's sleep needs met when they indicated the need for same. A child was noted to fall asleep on the couch while relaxing and was immediately moved to a cot to allow for a more restful sleep.
- There was access in each room to a family style couch where the children were observed to rest, play and chat with friends and promoted comfort for the staff who were reading stories with a small group.
- Children's noses were cleaned as required and staff were observed to wash hands following this.
- All children could move about freely and there was no restriction placed on their movement.
- When going outside the children were appropriately dressed in coats/jumpers as required.

Supporting Relationships

- Each staff member was assigned to a care room, the children appeared to be familiar with the staff and sought their support when needed. The children in the baby/wobbler room were held and comforted often.
- The children in the full day care room upstairs were observed to play alone and play in small groups. This group were also observed to play outside and in the large hall downstairs.

- The staff spoke with parents to at drop off and collection, the staff in the baby/wobbler room kept notes on each child of nappy changes, what each child ate, their sleep times and activities, this was the basis of discussion when parents/guardians came to collect the child.

Physical And Material Environment

- Each of the care rooms had a variety of toys and resources suitable for the ages of the children attending the room. There was a storeroom of additional toys and resources available to the staff to promote the different areas of development across the different age groups.
- The resources in each room were specific to encourage the development of each child, i.e. jigsaws and blocks and bricks for fine motor development, sensory play was conducted outside with water play, no evidence of this however was available on the day of inspection.
- The height of the tables and chairs was suitable for the children who could move their chair easily and sit at a table that was at their height, this allowed for easy use for tabletop activities and for mealtimes.
- There were home corners for imaginary play and storytelling for cognitive and speech development.
- There were floor mats in each of the rooms that allowed the children to use this surface for play and using push toys etc.
- All shelving was accessible to the children, and they were able to choose their activities as required.
- There were suitable adult chairs available to the adults to be comfortable while caring for the children.

Programme Of Activities:

- Currently during the summer months there was no dedicated plan for the daily schedule.

The Outdoor Environment

- The outdoor environment consisted of one large space. The area was predominantly covered with tarmac and an area of the yard was covered with artificial grass. There was a sheltered area where the children had access to a blackboard and chalk.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. The staff of the baby/wobbler room explained that they were not able to take the young children outside on a daily basis depending on the numbers in attendance. Not taking the children outside daily does not allow for changes in environment and access to fresh air for these children.

Physical And Material Environment.

2. There was a lack of resources in the outdoor area, there was one ride on toy and the four kitchens available that did not have any equipment with which the children could play with. The children were using stones as cooking equipment. Not having sufficient materials and resources may hinder the children's development such as sensory, gross motor and fine motor development.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The registered provider has committed on the corrective and preventive action form to take the young children from the baby and toddler rooms outside daily.
2. The equipment for the outdoor area has been added to by moving resources to the service and further materials have been ordered, the registered provider has committed to place markings on the yard to divide it up for the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

2. Photographic evidence of additional resources being added to the outdoor area has been received.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met and will be assessed on the next inspection.

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 yard gate was secured on the roadside and could not be accessed by the children and therefore the children could not get into the carpark or onto the road.
- There were handrails to both sides of the stairs for use by the children going up and down the stairs.
- The toys and equipment assessed were free from pinch and crush points.
- Storage for cleaning agents was out of the reach of the children.
- Bags and coats for the children were stored on hooks or in individual shelving for each child.
- Medication was stored on a high shelf out of the reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The nappy changing room was clean, the changing mat was intact and allowed for ease of cleaning.

Administration of Medication:

- No medications were administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes, and the children were put to sleep with their outdoor or heavy clothing removed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The gate into the yard was openable to the outside and therefore could allow an unauthorised adult to enter the premises and get access to the children.
2. Two wires were hanging down and accessible to the children in the full day care room upstairs. The wire from the thermometer/air assessment monitor was hanging loose. The wire from the fan heater/cooler was hanging by the door of the fridge and could be pulled. Both wires and the potential to pull the heater down posed a safety risk to the children.

3. The hall door from the yard into the large hall was swinging and could easily bang closed and cause an injury to a child. A temporary measure of a chair being used to block the door was used following identifying this risk to the staff.

Infection Control:

4. The hands of the children were not washed before dinner in the wobbler/toddler room, this was confirmed by the staff who subsequently took each child to the sink to wash their hands. Not washing hands before meals posed a risk of contamination and cross infection.
5. The tiles in the afterschool room near the door were chipping and posed an infection control risk where the floor could not be easily cleaned.

Safe Sleep:

6. The sleep checks completed on the children in the sleep room were completed every 10 minutes however the records were not adequate, the records included time of check, position of the child, however, did not include the colour or breathing of the child and there was inadequate space for the staff to sign for each check completed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider has stated a revised chain locking system will be used.
2. Both wires have been moved onto a high shelf.
3. The hall door from the yard into the large hall has had a latch mechanism attached to hold the door open.

Infection Control:

4. The registered provider has committed that children's hands will be washed before meals daily with the staff informed via staff App on the need to wash hands frequently.
5. The tiles have been replaced and sealed with varnish to prevent further chipping.

Safe Sleep:

6. A new sleep check form has been developed and put into use by the staff indicating the time of the check, the position of the child, the colour and breathing of the child and space for the staff to sign for each check completed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A photograph has been received of the chain to be used on the gate.
2. Photographic evidence of the wired moved up high has been received.
3. Photographic evidence of the latch mechanism to hold the hall door open has been received.

Infection Control:

4. A photograph of the message sent to staff has been received.
5. A photograph of the replaced tiles has been received.

Safe Sleep:

6. The newly developed sleep check form has been reviewed and is adequate.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this Regulation have been met and will be assessed on the next inspection.