

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DS001				
Name of Service:	Chatterbox Childcare & Nexus Preschool				
Address of Service:	Kilmashogue, The Crescent, Two Oaks, Knocklyon, Dublin 16.				
Eircode:	D16CR6W				
Name of Registered Provider:	Kerrylee Hemspenstall				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date of Inspection:	12/03/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>32</td> <td>PM</td> <td>20</td> </tr> </table>	AM	32	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K</p>
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson and C Kerrigan
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable

Description of service

The service is located on the ground floor of a residential premises in Dublin 16. The service provides sessional, part time and full day care for a maximum of 68 children aged 2 – 6 years , including care for children with Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD). The service consists of six care rooms, namely the Cherry Blossom room, the Acorn room, the Chestnut room, the Ash room, the Elm room and the Maple room. An occupational therapy room, a sensory room, sanitary facilities and a kitchen are also available. An enclosed outdoor area is situated to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. The registered provider employs sixteen adults to work in the service, including a regional manager, two designated persons in charge and thirteen early years practitioners to work directly with the children. On the morning of inspection, the registered provider, the regional manager, two designated persons in charge and twelve early years practitioners were present.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. 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 inspectors wish 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*
- (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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The registered provider and designated persons in charge were present when the inspectors arrived announced to the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person is rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of the roster and conversation with the management showed that the registered provider currently employs sixteen adults. The full staff files of sixteen adults employed to work in the service were reviewed.
- (a) There were twenty-seven written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were five written and validated references available from a source other than a previous employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for sixteen adults employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for eight adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (3) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to sixteen adults before employment commenced.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that fourteen adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(4) Documentation was not available to demonstrate that two adults who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The staff members have applied to DCEDIY for qualification recognition. Management will ensure to try and recruit staff with a recognised qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

(4) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has attempted to address the non-compliance however this remains outstanding until evidence of the required qualification is received by the inspectorate.

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) There were a sufficient number of staff members working directly with the children on the day of inspection. There were eight staff members working with thirty-four children in the morning and six staff members working with twenty-two children in the afternoon.

(2) The adult child ratios were maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision and assistance provided by staff members. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required.
- A weekly menu was displayed in the service and showed that the children attending receive 5 meals per day, one of which is a hot meal from an outside catering company with morning snack brought from home. On the day of inspection, the hot meal was vegetable pasta in a white sauce.
- Children's water bottles were on low-level shelving and accessible to the children throughout the day.
- The sleep room was dimly lit with soft music playing to facilitate a relaxing environment for sleeping children aged over 2 years. The room temperature was recorded as 18°C at 12:57pm.

Supporting relationships around children:

- There was a clear sense of familiarity between staff members and the children. Children appeared content and comfortable in their environment with staff members attending to the children's individual and specific needs as required.
- Staff members were observed to use positive and respectful language on the day of inspection. Children's achievements were reinforced with praise and recognition.
- The children were supported to follow their own interests, decision making was encouraged by staff members who were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day.
- Children were observed to be encouraged by staff to explore their environment, supported during activities and transitions.

- Staff were observed to sit with the children during mealtimes and activities, engaging in meaningful interactions and offering support where required.
- Staff members discussed how they communicate with parents through updates on digital software applications and informal chats at drop off and collection times.

Physical and material environment:

- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children in the care rooms, facilitating a comfortable area to eat meals and take part in tabletop activities.
- Equipment and materials in the care rooms were in good working order. Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, construction toys, cars, animals, dolls and buggies, cosy areas, dress up, sensory activities and a selection of books were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.
- There was a large, enclosed outdoor play area available for the children. The equipment and toys included a large climbing frame with a slide, equipment for sensory play activities and various ride on equipment providing gross motor and learning opportunities for children. Children in all care rooms were observed to use the outdoor play area on the day of inspection.
- Children were observed to use the sensory room on the day of inspection, offering the children opportunities to play and relax in a calming environment other than their care room.
- Children's artwork, photographs, family walls and birthday charts were displayed throughout the care rooms, supporting the children's sense of identity and links between home and the service.

Programme of Activities and implementation to support development:

- Staff members discussed techniques used to support children during transitions and the service's daily routine, such as picture books and prompts.
- Picture Exchange Communication System (PECS) was used in the ASD care rooms as a support for children and staff members, promoting and developing communication skills.

Non-Compliance Information

1. A defined space for children to rest or take part in quiet activities was not available in the outdoor area, limiting their choice and opportunities for play.
2. There was no hot meal alternative available to children who attend the service on a full-time basis. It is acknowledged that snack alternatives were available to children who did not want the hot meal option.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Management have purchased additional toys for the garden and new benches for children to sit and rest when they would like to.
2. Management will ensure that there will be an alternative hot meal if the children do not like the one on offer on a particular day.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19.