

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

| | | | |
|--|--|----|-------|
| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2024FL012 | | |
| Name of Service: | Home from Home Creche Balrothery | | |
| Address of Service: | Darcystown, Balrothery, Co. Dublin | | |
| Eircode: | K32 KX97 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Rachel Cawley | | |
| Service type: | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional | | |
| Date(s) of Inspection: | 07/05/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 21 | PM 19 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6. | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | AM Coyle | | |
| 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

Home from Home Balrothery is one of three early years services owned and operated by the registered provider in the Balbriggan area, this service opened in December 2024. The service is conducted from a single storey converted domestic dwelling on the outskirts of Balrothery village in North Dublin. There are 3 care rooms in operation in the service namely the Wobbler Room, Toddler Room and the Preschool room. A fourth care room is not in use at the present time. A separate sleep room is available in the service, along with a kitchen and office. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side of the service. Home from Home Balrothery provides full day-care, part-time care and sessional preschool to children between the ages of 1– 6 years operating from 07:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday for 51 weeks of the year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

The registered provider and company director employs a service manager to oversee the operational management of the service. On the day of the inspection the manager was present with 6 staff members. One staff member was employed in the service to work with school aged children only, one of the registered providers was present in the service on the day of inspection.

Methodology

Tusla 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11 and 23; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 25.

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, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was present in the service when the inspector arrived on the morning of the inspection, and the service manager was present for the duration of the inspection.
- All staff files were reviewed which consisted of a total of 10 files maintained for the registered provider, company director, 5 core staff members, 1 relief staff member 1 staff member who works with the school aged children only and the chef.
- (2)(a) Ten written and appropriately validated references were available from a past employer.
- (b) Nine written and appropriately validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, company director and 8 staff members. The Garda vetting records reviewed demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the registered provider, company director and 6 staff members who worked directly with the pre-school children in the service held a major award in Early Childhood

Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)&(b)A second validated written reference was not available for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2) (a) & (b)

Please see attached second reference for staff member.

Preventive Action

Check staff files regularly to ensure everything is onsite and in place for all staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

One validated written reference.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived announced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler room, there were 7 children aged 1 year 1 month to 2 years being cared for by 2 staff members.
- In the Toddler room there were 6 children aged 2 years to 2 years 8 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the Preschool room there were 8 children aged 2 years 10 months to 4 years 10 months being cared for by 2 staff members, one staff member was employed for 3 hours each day to reduce the adult to child ratio, and to work directly with children with additional needs, when necessary, in a post funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times as evidenced in the staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained in the service.

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 are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service:

Basic needs:

- There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service with all meals provided by the service for children attending on a full day care basis. Mealtimes were observed to be a pleasant unhurried experience with children given plenty of time to enjoy their meals. Staff members were observed sitting with the children engaging them in conversation whilst encouraging them to eat. The staff members in the Wobbler room and Toddler room sat in front of the children who required assistance with eating warmly engaging with the children at their eye level. Throughout the care rooms the children's water bottles were accessible to them on low level shelving for them to take as desired throughout the day.
- Nappy changing took place at scheduled times in the care rooms and more frequently as required throughout the day. The staff members engaged positively with the children throughout the process by singing songs and chatting to the children. Older children accessed the bathroom independently with support provided as needed, the children were gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards.
- The day of inspection was warm and sunny. The staff members ensured that the children had sun cream applied prior to going outside and limited the amount of time the children were exposed to the sun during outdoor play. Additionally, the children were encouraged to take regular drinks throughout the day.
- Children's individual sleep needs were met in the service. The children attending the Wobbler room were observed being placed to sleep in the sleep room adjacent to the care room when they showed signs of tiredness, and the staff members stated that the children's home routine was followed in the service. If children's sleep times coincided with mealtimes they were provided with their meals when they woke up. The children attending the Toddler were placed to sleep on stackable beds in the care room after they had their dinner. Rest areas including soft mats and cushions were provided in the care rooms should the children choose to rest at any time throughout the day.

- All children engaged in outdoor play in the services enclosed outdoor area on the day of inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The atmosphere in the service was warm and child centred as evidenced in the sensitivity and kindness shown by the staff members to the children through nurturing interactions. The staff members were observed listening attentively and giving each child plenty of time to express their thoughts and questions and willingly engaged with the children as play partners as needed.
- The service uses a digital software programme to communicate with parents in real time regarding the children's play activities, eating, sleeping and toileting throughout the day. Staff members were also observed updating and conversing with parents at children's drop off and collection.
- Staff members were observed to support each other in the care of the children and regularly updated each other in relation to the care of the children particularly around staff break times. This practice ensures a smooth transition of care for the children.

Physical and material environment:

- Throughout the care rooms the learning materials and play resources were accessible to the children on low level shelving for them to take and return as they chose, this encouraged the children's independence and choice.
- Toys and play materials suitable for the age and stage of the children accommodated in each room were provided to support the development of the children's fine motor skills with standard jigsaws, pegged wooden jigsaws, wooden and plastic bricks, interlocking plastic toys, shape sorters, small world figurines and animals, stacking toys and threading equipment were observed.
- Defined areas of interest including resourced home areas, construction toys, transport resources and a range of arts and crafts materials were provided in the care rooms. Children were observed to choose the materials they wanted to play with and were well supported by the staff members present.
- In all the care rooms a suitable range of books were available to support the children's language development.
- The children's artwork was displayed in the care rooms, along with family photographs, this practice supports children in bridging the gap between the service and home.
- An enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the service. The area was surfaced with safety tiles, a wooden climbing frame with steps and a slide was provided to support the children's gross motor play

along with a smaller climbing frame and separate slide. A range of ride on toys were available and the space provided facilitated the children's movement.

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

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was not immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection. One staff member had in date FAR certification only and was not present in the service for the entire operational hours. Two staff members have in date paediatric first aid training.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(1) A second person will complete FAR training in August 2025.

Preventive Action

Check staff files regularly to ensure everything is onsite and in place for all staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of FAR booking form.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 25 - First aid has been reviewed and accepted.