

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH035
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Name of Service:	The Holy Family Parish Community Creche
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Address of Service:	2 Grange Close, Muirhevnamore, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 X36X
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Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Bradley
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Flood
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).

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Description of service

The Holy Family Parish Community Creche is a community-based service, managed by a voluntary committee and in operation since 1997. The service provides full day care, part- time and sessional care to pre-school children from 0-6 years. The maximum number of children that be accommodated is 41 and the service operates from 8.30am – 5.30pm Monday – Friday.

The service operates from a renovated public building within a residential area of Dundalk town. There is off street parking available for parental drop off and collection. There are 3 care rooms in operation namely The Waddler Room, The Toddler Room and The Baby Room. There are 2 dedicated sleep rooms and an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were 25 employed staff in the service which included the following:

- 20 childcare staff who work directly with the preschool children and this includes the designated person in charge and the named deputy person.
- 5 ancillary staff members who carry out catering, administrative, maintenance and cleaning duties.

The registered provider is a member of the voluntary management committee and does not work directly with the preschool children.

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

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance. As a result, the scope of the inspection included The Baby and Waddler rooms.

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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge who is also the service manager and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived at the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(c) When questioned, staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Following a discussion with the service manager and a review of the staff roster, 10 new members of staff have been employed since the last inspection on 29/10/2024.

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The staff files for the 15 existing members of staff were reviewed at the previous inspection and were found to be compliant.

The staff files for 10 new members of staff were presented for inspection and reviewed:

(a) & (b)

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

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for each of the 10 new members of staff.

Garda vetting disclosures were also reviewed for the existing 15 staff members who were present in the service.

The documents reviewed demonstrated that the registered provider adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A review of the employment history for the 10 newly employed staff demonstrated that 1 adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. International police vetting was presented for inspection and met regulatory compliance.

(3) Following a review of the staff files presented for inspection, documentary evidence demonstrated that all vetting procedures had been carried out prior to 10 new staff members commencing work in the service.

(4) Sufficient documentary evidence was available to confirm that 9 new staff members employed who work directly with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Documentary evidence previously reviewed for the service manager and 10 staff members employed to work directly with children met regulatory compliance.

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

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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 inspector arrived unannounced at 10.25am and remained so throughout the inspection.

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

- In the Baby Room there were 8 children aged 1 year 4months to 1 year and 10 months being cared for by 4 staff members.
- In the Toddler Room there were 19 children aged 2 to 3 years being cared for by 5 staff members.
- In the Waddler Room there were 9 children aged 1 year 11 months to 2 years being cared for by 4 staff members.

The designated person in charge and deputy person were also present in the service and engaged in administrative duties. They were also available to provide assistance in the care rooms as required.

Three additional adults were present in the service and were engaged in catering, and administrative duties.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at 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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

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Compliance Information

- (1) Documentary evidence of the following requested records was presented for inspection and reviewed.
- (h) The arrival and departure times for all children present in the service were available on the electronic application record.
- (i) A staff roster was available in the service and was reflective of the staff present in the service. The arrival and departure times for the staff and the allocated break times were also included on the record.

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.

Compliance Information

There were 3 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely the Baby Room, Waddler Room and the Toddler Room. A sampling process was used and as a result the Baby and Waddler Rooms are the subject of inspection under Regulation 19.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider facilitated each child's learning and development:

Basic Needs:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service with a variety of fresh food provided which was prepared by the resident cook. The breakfast was reported to consist of cereals, porridge and toast. The morning snack consisted of a selection of fresh fruit, and the afternoon snack was beans on toast. The dinner was a chicken pasta bake with garlic bread. Meals were of an age-appropriate consistency and extra portions were offered to those who wanted more. The staff were observed to sit with the children at mealtimes and while promoting independence, they also provided assistance and encouragement if required. The staff supporting the children in highchairs were observed to sit directly in front of the children talking to and encouraging them. Mealtimes were also used to encourage conversations between the children. Assistance was given to the children who required help. Bibs were provided for the younger children and hands and faces were cleaned appropriately after the meals.

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- The children were observed to have access to drinks cups as they required with the majority observed to drink water. When questioned, staff in the Baby Room confirmed that bottles of milk and powdered infant formula were sent into the service made up by the parents and stored appropriately in the fridge.
- Nappies were changed regularly in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. Any children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision also provided by staff as required.
- Individual child led sleep needs were followed in the service. After dinnertime children were also facilitated to rest in the soft areas if they required.
- All children were observed to get a change of environment to the outdoor area on the premises. In addition, the children attending the Baby Room were also observed to go on a walk outside around the community in the large multi-seat buggies.

Supporting Relationships:

- Communication with parents was predominantly via the electronic interactive communication system that records and shares information about the children's daily activities and care needs with parents. 'Picture stories and the children's learning journey are also shared through this 'app'. Partnership with parents is also supported through verbal communication at drop off and collection, social media and email.
- A positive team ethos was evident in the service. A 'white board' was observed in use in each of the care rooms and clearly displayed details of the staff present in the room and their break times, the staff roles for the day, the planned activities and the children's emerging interests. It was reported that team meetings occur in the service on a regular basis and that the staff have allocated protected time for training and support. Staff supervision is also provided by the service manager, and it is reported that ongoing professional development for staff is encouraged and supported in the service.
- The staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, plus positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff. For example: *"Good job.....! Are you a builder too...I love to see all these builders helping out.." At tidy up time one staff member was observed "...will you do tidy up time?...good job.....5 more minutes to tidy up time..good job"*.
- The staff were obviously familiar with the children in the care rooms and during conversation with the inspector spoke fondly about "today" being their last day with the current group of children as they move on to their next group. The staff had also prepared a gift bag for each child to celebrate their last day.

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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.

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 based on the following observation made during the inspection

Infection Control:

1. In the Waddler Room there was not a constant supply of thermostatically controlled warm water available at the wash hand basin in the sanitary area observed in use. For example, when the inspector checked the hot water at 11.40am it was cold to touch. At 11.45am hand washing commenced prior to lunch time. the water used for handwashing remained cold when it was rechecked by the inspector at 11.55am. This is a cross-infection risk.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A new water heater was installed in the waddler room on the 17th of July 2026. After investigation as to why there was no hot water in this room on the day of inspection it was discovered that the switch had been knocked off accidentally by the cleaning staff as they put away their equipment the previous evening. I have enclosed a copy of the receipt for the new boiler and a photograph I have enclosed a copy of the receipt for the new boiler and a photograph.

In order to prevent this from happening again the caretaker has been instructed and agreed to check each morning prior to the children attending that the switch is on.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of new water heater .

Evidence of regular hot water temperature records.

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Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliance, together with photographic evidence. Based on the information submitted, the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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) The registered provider ensured that there was a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) for children, on the premises at all times. Eight 'FAR' certificates were available for inspection and reviewed. A review of the roster present for inspection indicated that a member of staff with a FAR qualification was rostered at all times.

(2)(a)and(b) A number of suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were stored safely on the premises