

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC232
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Name of Service:	Little Oaks Preschool
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Address of Service:	Old Primary School, New Road, Kilworth, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P61 EK44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jenna Kenneally
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co. Cork P51DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and J Dennehy
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Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager
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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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Little Oaks Preschool is a private sessional service in operation since 2014. While registered to take children from 2 years to 6 years of age, children who currently attend are aged from 3 years to 5 years old. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme is facilitated between 9.20am and 12.20pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The service operates from two classrooms located in the old national school in the rural village of Kilworth in north Cork. The service also has an office, cloak room, entrance hall, adult and children's sanitary facilities and a large outdoor play area located at the rear of the building.

Staffing

There are currently six staff members employed in the service including the registered provider and two adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. All six were in attendance on the day of inspection.

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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations: Regulation 9 management and recruitment, Regulation 11 staffing, Regulation 15 record of a pre-school child, Regulation 16 record in relation to pre-school service, Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of a child, Regulation 22 food and drink, Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, Regulation 26, fire

safety measures, Regulation 28 insurance, and Regulation 29 premises; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 24 checking in and out and record of attendance and Regulation 25 first aid.

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.

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
- (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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a named deputy was available to deputise as required.
 - (b) Both the registered provider and deputy were on duty when the inspectors arrived at the service.
- (2) The staff files in relation to six adults who were employed in the service were the subject of the inspection.
- (a) Of the 12 required references, 10 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the 12 required references, 2 were from another source other than a previous employer with records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the six adults. However, the service had not adhered to the re-vetting time frame for three of the adults as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (4) Records demonstrated that 5 of the adults had achieved at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(d)
- 1. Police vetting was not available for one adult who resided outside of the jurisdiction for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
- 2. There was no evidence available to demonstrate that the qualification held by one of the adults met the minimum requirement of a level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The County Childcare Committee was contacted to assist with the police vetting process. An application was submitted, and police vetting was received.
2. A provisional transcript of results was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. A copy of police vetting was received in the office of the inspectorate.
2. A copy of the adult's qualification certificate in Early Learning and Care was received.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance.
- (3) The adult / child ratio was observed to be above the minimum requirement for the duration of the inspection. There were 5 adults directly caring for the 30 children that were in attendance.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i) A sample of 10 records of the early years children attending the service were reviewed. The records were discussed with the registered provider and had all the required information recorded.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (k) The inspector reviewed the accident and incident record book from January 2024 to the date of the inspection. There were 3 incidents in 2024 and 1 incident in 2025 recorded. The records reviewed contained all required information.

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff.

Basic needs:

- During snack time the staff sat with the children and assisted the children who required help with opening packaging and containers.
- The staff supported children if required when using either of the two sanitary facilities available to them. Staff supervised children's hand washing routines and offered verbal reminders.
- A nappy changing unit was available in the service, but nappy changing was not observed by the inspector on the day of the inspection. The inspector was informed that a limited number of children currently attending required nappy changing facilities.

- Outdoor play was observed and the children had access to a large concrete and grass outdoor area which staff stated was used daily. A separate changing space indoors was available in the service to allow children to put on wet gear and appropriate footwear. A roofed outdoor area allowed outdoor play at all times of the year. A large supply of outdoor toys was evident but in storage on the day of inspection due to a forecasted storm.
- The available space within the care rooms sufficiently met the children’s need to move freely as they engaged with play resources and participated in small and large group activities.

Supporting relationships:

- The adults in both care rooms were noted to interact with the children in a caring manner throughout the inspection.
- Children were observed to play independently such as when they were playing outdoors. Staff facilitated children’s needs by allowing one child to return indoors when they were finished playing outside.
- Staff supported children to engage positively with each other and encouraged group learning such as when they practiced the safe cross code and at storey time.
- Children’s independence was encouraged, and this was seen when the children put on and took off wet gear in the hallway.
- The staff were warm and sensitive in their interactions with the children, lowering to their level to communicate and being responsive to the individual needs of the children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- During the sessional service, mid-morning snacks were provided by the parents/guardians and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Perishable foods were refrigerated as required on the day of inspection. Examples seen were raspberries, crackers, sandwiches, grapes cut up and yogurt.
- Water was the main choice of drink and the children’s own individual water bottles were accessible at all times.

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 outdoor play area was observed to be secured with metal railing.

Infection control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands throughout the day such as before food and after using the toilet.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste.
- Children's coats were stored off the ground on hooks.

Fire safety:

- Fire extinguishers were noted to be wall mounted.

Outing:

- The registered provider informed the inspector that no outings occur from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The cleaning agent used for the nappy changing unit was stored on the window ledge of the bathroom which was accessible to the children. This posed a risk to the children.
2. Garda vetting was available for all the adults; however, three vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspector Regulatory Notice 'EUI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
3. The cable from a wall mounted television and a portable heater were accessible to the children, which posed a risk of injury. The issue was also non-compliant on the last inspection dated 23 April 2023.

Infection control:

4. Warm running water, required for handwashing was unavailable at the wash hand basins in the children's sanitary facilities. The water temperatures were recorded between 11.5°C and 11.8°C which was not of the required temperature. Ineffective hygienic handwashing poses a risk of infection to children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The cleaning agents have now been removed and are labelled and stored in the staff room.
2. The service has linked with Early Childhood Ireland and contacted the Bureau to obtain GNVB number to apply for re-vetting. The service plans to adhere to the re-vetting time frame for three of the adults as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.
3. All cables and the heater have been moved out of reach of the children and a shelf has been put in place to securely hold the heater.

Infection control:

4. The temperature of the hot water boilers in the bathrooms has been increased to provide warm water. The service will ensure that temperatures are at the right setting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence received.
2. Proof of renewal of three adults Garda vetting was received in the office of the inspectorate
3. Photographic evidence of the shelf and leads secured was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Infection control:

4. Photographic evidence of the boiler received.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1)
The attendance book was available in which the inspector observed that all the children present on the day had their check in and out times completed for the duration of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)
(b) A daily record in writing of visitors to the premises was not available. It is acknowledged that the registered provider stated she was unable to locate the records on that day. Records not being maintained of visitors to the service could pose a safety risk to both staff and children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A visitor's record is now kept securely at the entrance of the setting. All staff members are aware of this.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the visitor's record was received at the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 24.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
There was no staff member with up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training on duty on the day of inspection during the hours the service was operational. It was acknowledged that staff had paediatric first aid training. This posed a health risk to both staff and children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The FAR certificate for one staff member was sent to the inspector. The service plans to ensure that a FAR trained staff member is available to the children at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of an in date FAR certificate was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 25. This will be reviewed at next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)
(b) The certification of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated this was carried out on the 09 November 2024. The certification of testing for the smoke alarms was dated the 04 October 2024.

(4) The services fire evacuation procedure was clearly displayed at the fire exit door.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(a) Fire drills were not practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drills were completed in September and November 2024. This posed a safety risk to both staff and children in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire drills are now carried out at the end of each month in the service since inspection and all staff members are aware of this.

Supporting documentation submitted

The statement from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified in Regulation 26. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate indicated that sufficient cover was in place for the provision of a sessional service and the policy was valid until 27 March 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From a visual assessment, the building appears to be of a sound and stable structure.
- (b) The entrance to the service was secure on arrival. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- (c) Within both care rooms, natural lighting was provided through windows, and this was supplemented by artificial lighting. Adequate lighting was also ensured in the sanitary facilities using a combination of natural and artificial lighting.

(e) There were adequate sanitary facilities in the premises, accessible from the hallway. Children had access to 6 toilets and 4 sinks and adults had access to 1 sink and 1 toilet. A nappy changing unit was accessible in one of the bathrooms also.

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

1. The service room temperatures were not maintained between the recommended levels of 18-22°C.
 - Playroom 1 temperature was recorded at 15°C at 10.05am and 16.7°C at 12.08pm.
 - Playroom 2 was recorded at 13.3°C at 10.20am and 15.6°C at 12.17pm.
 - The child's sanitary facilities were recorded between 10.6°C. and 12.2°C.

It is noted that the heating was in operation but was not effective at maintaining adequate room temperatures. There were also wall mounted heaters in the sanitary areas and available in the care rooms, these were not seen to be in operation.

2. Mould was observed on the ceiling of playroom 1 and the cloakroom. This can pose a health hazard. Mould was observed also on the inspection dated the 23 April 2023.

(d)

3. Evidence that effective cleaning had taken place in the service was not available. It is acknowledged that cleaning records were available and signed. The lack of cleaning posed a risk of infection to both staff and children. The following was observed in the care rooms, communal areas, and sanitary areas;
 - The floor and wall behind the toilets in one of the lower children's sanitary facilities was not maintained in a clean condition, with a build up of dirt and grime.
 - The nappy changing mat was stained, and the unit had a build-up of dust and dirt. This issue was also noted was noted on last inspection dated 23 April 2023.
 - The floor in both care rooms and the hallway required cleaning as they were noted to be stained and there was a build-up of debris in the edges and corners.
 - The mats in the hallway were noted to stained and had a build-up of debris.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Each classroom has been equipped with additional heaters to ensure the temperature is maintained at 18°C to 22°C and staff will ensure heaters are on for longer periods of time.
2. All mould has been removed from the classroom and cloakroom. A new improved cleaning schedule has been put in place which includes monitoring and cleaning any patches of mould in the pre-school.

3. A new cleaning schedule has been put on place to include the hallway mat and carpets to be cleaned twice daily. All staff members are involved in the cleaning schedule.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of bathroom wall mounted heater received.
2. Photographic evidence received in the office of the inspectorate of mould removed from the wall and cloakroom and the new cleaning schedule.
3. Photographic evidence received of the toilet area, changing mat, hall, carpet and mats cleaned and the new cleaning schedule.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 29.