

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:	23/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Co Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher and S O Brien
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	N/A
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Description of service

Little Oaks Preschool is a private sessional service in operation since 2014. The service operates from two classrooms located in the old national school in the village of Kilworth in 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. The service is registered to accommodate children from 2 to 6 years of age, children who currently attend are aged from 2.5 to 5 years old. The Early Childhood Care and Education scheme is facilitated between 9:20 and 12:20, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

There are four adults employed in the service including the registered provider and one of whom is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme. All four adults were working directly with the children 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 may also focus on other areas as required.

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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.

Additional Information

The locking mechanism on two fire exit doors in the service was identified as posing a potential safety risk and no wired smoke alarm was visible in one of the care rooms. A referral was made to the fire officer.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider and staff 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-

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Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspectors arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.

(c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. There was no Garda vetting due for renewal.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed:

- Fire safety policy
- Statement of purpose and function

The policies were observed to contain the required information to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

Non-Compliance Information

The following policies did not meet the regulatory requirements:

1. The infection control policy did not outline the following:

- Respiratory hygiene practices and procedures for children.
- Safe management of perishable foods.
- The correct infection control measures for nappy changing.
- The requirement to notify the agency of infectious diseases.

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2. The healthy eating policy did not outline the following:

- Inclusion of specific dietary, cultural or religious requirements.
- Supporting parents and guardian's choices.
- How food is safely stored and served.
- How children are supervised while eating and drinking.

3. The outdoor play policy did not outline the following:

- How children are supervised during play.
- The procedure for carrying out risk assessments.
- The safety requirements of the outdoor play area.

Therefore, the above policies and procedures may not adequately guide the staff in their care practices.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(2)(3) The three above policies have been updated. A regular review will take place between management to ensure policies are up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) A copy of the infection control policy was received
- (2) A copy of the healthy eating policy was received.
- (3) A copy of the outdoor play policy was received.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet regulatory compliance under Regulation 10.

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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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children at all times.

(3) The service maintained the minimum adult to child ratio required as per regulation. The ratio was as follows:

- The Little Oaks 1 room, there was 3 staff caring for 17 children aged 2 to 5 years.
- The Little Oaks 2 room, there was one staff caring for eight children aged 2 to 3 years.

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:

- Outdoor play was promoted and the children were observed to spend most of the morning outdoors on the day of inspection with the staff observing and assisting children during play. The inspector observed children playing with swings, a slide, pedal tractors and bikes. Children also had access to play kitchens, a chalk board, a sand area and toy building blocks. Children had planted sunflowers and tomatoes and were observing them growing in miniature green houses.
- While outdoors the children were noted to be dressed appropriately for the weather in wet suits, coats, hats and wellingtons.

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- It was noted that the children had freedom of movement within the outdoor and indoor environments, which enabled them to explore items of interest and initiate their chosen activities with ease. The children were observed to actively play outdoors on the day of inspection.
- Children's independence was promoted with staff observed supporting and encouraging children with self-help skills. Examples included children putting on and taking off their coats and hanging them up on individual hooks, bringing their perishable food to the fridge and putting their individual water bottle on the countertop.
- Snacks were provided by the parents and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples of snacks were yogurts, crackers, rice cakes, fruit, pasta, croissants and sandwiches.
- The inspector noted that two children were sitting longer at the snack table than the other children, who had finished snack and were given sufficient time to eat without being rushed.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet under the supervision of the staff who were available to assist if needed.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There was no rest area available in Little Oaks 1 room and the rest area in Little Oaks 2 room required further development as limited equipment was in place for children. Not having an adequate designated rest area does not allow the children to relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary.
2. In Little Oaks 1, a child required their face to be cleaned after outdoor play. A staff member was observed changing this child's clothes but did not clean their face. This posed a risk to the child's wellbeing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Two appropriate rest areas are now in place. A rest area will be available daily for the children.
2. Staff have been informed of the need to keep children's faces clean. Staff will be reminded to do this.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of the two rest areas received.
2. The response from the registered provider is accepted.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 19(a).

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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.

Compliance Information

General safety:

- The windows in the care rooms were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with a stone wall and metal fencing. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The equipment used in the outdoor area was in good condition and was able to be stored under a roofed area when not in use.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

- Children's coats were stored on hooks and bags were stored off the ground on shelving.
- A refrigerator was available in each of the care rooms for the storage of perishable foods.
- Children were observed washing their hands before snack time and after using the toilets.
- The tables were observed to be cleaned before snack time.

Administration of medication:

- The registered provider informed the inspector that no regular medicine was being administered to a child currently in the service. Temperature reducing medicines were stored out of reach of the children for use if required.

Fire safety:

- The locking mechanism on two fire exit doors in the service were identified as posing a potential safety risk and a referral was made to the fire officer.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

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Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Two portable heaters were in use in the service while the children were in the care rooms. One heaters cable was accessible to the children. This posed a risk of injury. Accessible cables were found to be non-compliant on previous inspections on 10 October 2022 and 21 January 2025. The corrective actions submitted following those inspections failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
2. A staff members personal belongings were seen to be stored on a shelving unit in Little Oaks 1 room. This handbag was accessible to the children which posed a risk of a child removing unknown personal items from the staff members bag.
3. In Little Oaks 2 room, decorative ivy string was easily accessible to the children. A child was observed playing with the string and the inspector took the string out of reach. This posed a risk of strangulation to the children.
4. A plastic box and jug was observed to be cracked and had sharp edges in Little Oaks 1 room. This posed a safety risk to the children.
5. Disused plastic sheeting and astroturf grass was found in a corner of the outdoor area and was accessible to the children. This posed a safety risk.

Infection control:

6. In the children's sanitary areas, it was observed that the toilet roll was stored on top of the toilet cistern. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children.
7. While observing nappy changing, a staff member was observed to not wear a disposable apron or gloves. This posed a risk of cross infection to the children and staff.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The portable heaters are stored away from children's reach. Leads are covered with plastic and not accessible to children. Staff will ensure heaters are not within children's reach and no leads are exposed.
2. Staff members belongings are removed. All staff belongings are stored in the office.
3. Decorative ivy has been removed. Staff aware to keep hanging items out of children's reach.
4. Plastic jug removed from the play kitchen. Risk assessment of toys carried out, any broken toys were removed.

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5. The plastic sheeting and astroturf grass have been removed. A risk assessment was completed in the outdoor area and any broken items were removed.

Infection control:

- 6. Toilet rolls are now stored in a holder and the service will ensure holders are maintained in the service.
- 7. Disposable gloves and aprons are now supplied and the service will ensure a stock of these are in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

- 1. Photographic evidence of the heater stored out of reach of children with no leads exposed received.
- 2. Photographic evidence of staff items removed.
- 3. Photographic evidence of ivy removed received.
- 4. The response from the registered provider was accepted.
- 5. Photographic evidence of the items removed received.

Infection control:

- 6. Photographic evidence of the toilet roll in a holder received.
- 7. Photographic evidence of the purchase of disposable aprons and gloves 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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The staff working in the service ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service.
- (3)
- (b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in a visitors log at the entrance to the service. The inspector was requested to signed in and out from the service.

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)
- Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for one of the staff working in the service.
- (2)
- (a) There was one first aid box which was sufficiently stocked and available in the service. This was safely stored out of reach of children.
- (b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

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.*

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(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
(c) an authorised person.

(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)
- (a) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted to be on 27 February 2025.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms available. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 09 October 2025, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 30 April 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The fire procedures were displayed on the wall and fire doors.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

(b) safe and secure,

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(b) The entrance to the service was secure, this restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised, however the locking mechanism was identified as posing a potential safety risk and a referral was made to the fire officer.

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Non-Compliance Information

(c) At 11:40 in Little Oaks 2 room, a room temperature of 16.3° was recorded. Care room temperatures should be between 18° and 22°C.

(d) The following areas were observed to require cleaning, maintenance or repair:

- A unit for storing art supplies in Little Oaks 2 was observed to have marks on the side.
- Mats in Little Oaks 1 were observed to be soiled.
- The kitchen units in Little Oaks 1 room were observed to be unclean.
- A fabric pizza toy in Little Oaks 1 room was observed to be soiled.
- The nappy changing unit was observed to have debris in the corners. This was found as a previous non-compliance on inspections carried out on 10 October 2022 and 21 January 2025.
- There was a hole in the corner of the floor in the corridor near Little Oaks 2 room.
- There was evidence of peeling paint on the ceiling in the corridor area.
- There was visible evidence of mould like marks on the ceilings and walls in both care rooms.
- The walls in Little Oaks 2 care room were visibly dirty.
- A metal tin located in the kitchen area was observed to be rusty and sticky in Little Oaks 1 room which did not allow for effective cleaning.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) Additional heaters have been purchased and the room temperature will be monitored. The heaters and oil heating will be turned on early in the morning.

(d) The items and areas listed have been cleaned and painted. Unclean toys, a mat and the metal tin have been removed. The hole has been repaired. Daily cleaning will be carried out and risk assessments to ensure damaged items are removed.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c) Photographic evidence of additional heaters purchased received.

(d) Photographic evidence received of the above areas cleaned and painted and of items removed.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance identified under regulation 29 (c)(d).