

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC358
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Name of Service:	Scoil Ursula Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Scoil Ursula N.S, Blackrock, Cork, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 XC91
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Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Keane
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	13/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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	N/A
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Description of service

Scoil Ursula Pre-School operates as a non-profit service that provides part time and sessional care services to children aged from 2 to 6 years. The service operates from 9am to 2pm, Monday to Friday. The service operates from two care rooms situated in a one storey, detached, prefabricated building that is located on the grounds of Scoil Ursula National School. Scoil Ursula Pre-School shares the main entrance, foyer and outdoor area to the front of the building with a second registered early years service.

Staffing

There are five staff members employed in the service. On the day of inspection, there were four staff working directly with the children. The person in charge was also present and was mainly office based.

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.

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 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*
- (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.

(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 deputy who was able to deputise if required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge and the named deputy were on the premises for the duration of the inspection and were on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. This was clearly outlined in the checking in and out records for the staff.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service and all staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Five staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (a) Eight of the ten references were from a past employer and were validated.
 - (b) Two of the ten references were from a reputable source and were validated.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all five staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes in relation to one staff member, 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.
 - (d) Police vetting was not required for any staff member as they had not lived outside of a state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) All five staff working directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the national qualification framework or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent.

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) There were adequate staff to care for the children in the attendance in the service during the inspection.

(2) On arrival to the service, there were 28 children aged from 3 to 5 years being cared for 4 staff members. In the afternoon, there were 15 children aged from 3 to 5 years being cared for by 4 staff members. Therefore, the minimum adult to child ratios were being adhered to at all times during the inspection.

(8) (a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times while the service was in operation. This was outlined on the staff checking in and out records that were reviewed by the inspector.

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 sample of 12 children's records were reviewed and all forms were completed and contained the relevant information outlined from (a) to (i).

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis

Compliance Information

(i) Records in writing of the staff checking in and out times were reviewed and clearly outlined the start and finish times of each staff member.

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

Basic Needs

- Children were observed spending most of their day in the outdoor area. Children sat in the care rooms for snack time and were observed sitting in the quiet areas and playing with toys after their snack
- Children had individual water bottles available to them throughout the day. The staff were aware of the importance of keeping the children hydrated due to the warm weather. Shaded areas were available to the children in the outdoor area.
- Children were observed to freely move around the outdoor area and care rooms during the inspection and participated in activities of their choice.
- Individual care plans were available for children you required them. The person in charge outlined to the inspector the importance of meeting the needs of each child in the service and ensured that staff had the appropriate support and training to ensure that each child's learning and development was being supported.
- Staff were observed supporting children with toileting and handwashing while also encouraging independence and self-help skills.

Supporting Relationships

- The person in charge outlined that the service meets with each child's parents and guardians in November and February of each year to outline their child's learning and development and to also support each child's family. The staff outlined the importance of partnership with parents.
- It was observed that there was a sense of teamwork between the staff in the service.
- Children were observed sitting and enjoying their lunches while chatting to the staff. Lunch time was observed to be a relaxed activity.
- The staff stated that they listen to the children's opinions and place these on a 'Wonder Wall' where they add photos of the children also. This was to support the children in leading their own learning. The staff stated they used this wall to develop activities around the children's interest.
- The person in charge advocated and ensured that children's equality and diversity was respected throughout the service.

Physical and Material Environment

- The outdoor area was a large space with different surfaces such as timber bark, grass and matting.
- There were tyres, rocks and timber logs with benches for the children to explore and develop their physical development. Children were observed using the rocks as stepping stones.
- A kitchen area was available to the children with a water hose. Children were observed enjoying the water play and learning pouring skills.
- Tuff trays were available with plastic bricks. Visual images of buildings in Ireland were also on display and staff stated they supported the children in their construction skills.
- A slide, swings and a climbing frame were observed to be enjoyed by the children.
- The care rooms had interest corners for the children to explore. Dress up and role play areas to support imaginative play were observed.
- Each care room had a large tent for children to use as an additional space to the room and to take some time away from the larger group.
- Paint and paper were available to the children after snack time and the children were observed enjoying the messy play aspect of the activity.

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 main entrance to the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised access.
- Internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas.
- The outdoor area was safe and secure with a fence and gate.
- Windows were observed to be secure on the day of inspection.
- During the inspection, cleaning products were stored on shelves that were out of reach to children in the care rooms.
- Toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition on inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for the children and staff in the sanitary areas.
- It was observed that children washed their hands after outdoor play and before snack times.
- Children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator to prevent perishable foods from spoiling.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be free clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A Garda vetting disclosure was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting. It is acknowledged that an application for renewal of Garda vetting in respect of the staff member was made on the 02 May 2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

On the 27 May 2025, the person in charge submitted documented evidence of the garda vetting disclosure in respect of the staff member. The service stated in their response that up-to-date Garda vetting for each staff member will be on the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Documented evidence of the Garda vetting disclosure was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The documented evidence submitted has been reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e)
There were adequate and suitable sanitary facilities available to the children and staff in the service. There were two toilets and two wash hand basins available to the children adjacent to care room 2. There were two toilets and three wash hand basins available to the children adjacent to the foyer area in the service and were available to the children attending care room 1. There was also one toilet and one wash hand basin available to the staff adjacent to the foyer area.