

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC461
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Name of Service:	Wee Wisdom Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ballinraha, Glanworth, Fermoy, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 NV60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Brenda Burke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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

Wee Wisdom Pre-school is a private sessional early years service operating in the registered providers own home located outside Glanworth village. This service accommodates children aged from 2 to 6 years and is registered to provide two sessional services from 9:15 to 12:15 and 12:30 until 15:30 but currently only the morning session is in operation. The service is open Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is located in a rural area outside the village of Glanworth in north Cork. The service has access to three care rooms, two of which were in operation on the day of inspection, four children's toilets, one adult toilet and a storage room. There is a large outdoor enclosed play area to the back of the building and car parking is available at the side and front of the service.

Staffing

There is a total of eight staff employed by the service which includes the registered provider. The registered provider is service based. On the day of inspection, six staff members were present in the service and all six staff were working directly with the 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

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

A referral was made to the fire officer to assess fire safety in the service. Further information is available under Regulation 23 of the report.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider, person in charge 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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- (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 person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector 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) The recruitment records in relation to eight adults, seven of whom were employed in the service and working directly with the children and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.
- (a) Of the 16 required references, 7 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
 - (b) Of the 16 required references, 8 were from another source other than a previous employer with six required records of validation on file.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the eight adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was required and available for one of the eight adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

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(4) Records demonstrate that the adults had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to level 8 as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)
(a)(b) One reference was not available in respect of one adult and two references available for two adults had no evidence of validation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

All references are present in the files. A new reference check list has been created. All references will be checked for new staff going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email of references received.

A copy of the reference check list received.

A copy of the reference questionnaire received.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2).

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 policy on administration of medication was reviewed and contained the information required to guide staff in their care practices for the children.

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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 were adequate numbers of adults working directly with the children at all times. There were 24 children with 6 adults directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection.

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

- Room A, there were 3 adults caring for 15 children.
- Room B, there was two adults caring for nine children.

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;*

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(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

The service has 26 early years children registered and all records were available. A sample of 10 records were reviewed. They were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

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

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

Basic needs:

- While outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately in waterproof suits, coats and hats.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. Examples of this were children put on their own coats, put away lunch boxes and tidied up after play.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff informed the inspector that the service communicated in person with parents or guardians at collection or drop off and contacting via telephone or email if needed. Parents are also given a handbook and policies about the service on email.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care rooms at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.

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- The inspector observed an upset child to be comforted by a staff member in the outdoor area who responded positively to the child.
- Family photos and birthday calendars were displayed on the walls which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level while discussing, questioning and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example with staff making puzzles, bathing dolls, playing with moulding dough, gluing with children and also playing with a toy tunnel in the outdoor area.
- Staff members were observed to play with children in group activities such as guessing the missing item which the children visibly enjoyed.
- A familiarity with the routine of the day was evident as children transitioned from one activity to the next. This was observed in the transition from lunch time to outdoor play, as children cleaned away their belongings, dressed in outdoor clothing and went outdoors with staff members.
- Children's language development was supported through one-to-one discussions and storytelling which was observed during the inspection when children discussed topics like having a sister and names of dinosaurs with staff.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic need:

There was no comfortable soft seating available for the children in Room A for rest or relaxation. It is acknowledged that the registered provider identified the soft seating that was intended for this purpose was stored in the unused care room as the previously purchased seating had not lasted. This was a non-compliance in the last two inspection reports from 5 October 2021 and the 26 April 2023 where the registered provider had stated that new seating would be in place for the new term in September 2023. This was not observed on inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The seating arrangements that had been previously used were back in place and the service plans to set up more permanent seating in the future.

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Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the rest area in place area and the planned new rest area to be purchased.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was deemed to meet the regulatory compliance under Regulation 19(1)(a).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) The care rooms and the outdoor play areas were furnished with resources and equipment which were suitable for the various age groups of children attending the service. They provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of all children across all areas of development.

(3)

(a) The outdoor area was fully enclosed with a metal railing and timber fencing. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area. On the day of inspection all children were observed spending time outdoors. The area consisted of grass and a concrete area and had a covered section to ensure children could avail of outdoor play in all weathers. Numerous toys were present consisting of kitchens, bikes, slides, a playhouse, hoola hoops, a scooter and two tunnels.

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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

- The children's snacks were supplied by their parents or guardians and were refrigerated as necessary in the service.
- On the day of inspection, the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious and included sandwiches, crackers, yogurt, oranges and bananas, with water to drink.
- Drinking water was available to the children and was observed to be accessible to the children in between mealtimes.

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 toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack times and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in Room A for the storage of perishable foods.
- Lidded, foot pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste during the inspection.

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- Staff were observed sanitising the tables before serving the food to ensure the areas were kept clean and hygienic.

Fire safety:

- The service had two external exit doors labelled as fire exit doors, one of which was secured which could impede a safe exit in the event of an emergency. A referral has been made to the fire officer to assess the safety of the fire door.

Outing:

- No outings were conducted on the day of inspection. The registered provider informed the inspector that one yearly outing takes place with a risk assessment completed prior to this occurring.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

- Two loose cables on the wall in Room B were accessible to the children, which posed a risk of injury.
- The temperature of the hot water in a sink located behind the door of the children's toilets was recorded to have water temperature of 48.2°C. This posed a risk of scalding to a child.
- Staff handbags and coats were seen to be stored on low hooks in Room A. The handbags and coats were accessible to the children which posed a risk to a child removing unknown personal items from staff's bags.

Administration of medication:

- There was no anti-febrile medication available, contrary to the policy stating that it was available to administer in the service. It is acknowledged that the registered provider stated that parents live close to the service and children can be collected immediately if a temperature is recorded. This may pose a safety issue in the event of an emergency or parents / guardians are unable to collect a child. This was a non-compliance in the last inspection report from 26 April 2023 where the registered provider had stated that anti-febrile medication had been purchased. This was not observed on inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

- The loose wiring has been pinned and covered to the wall. The service will ensure that wiring is not accessible to the children in the future.

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2. The children are accompanied to the bathroom at all times to ensure they do not access the sink. A plumber had been arranged to come to the service to change the taps and insert a new thermostat.
3. Staff coats and handbags have been removed and put into a storage area. They will be stored away from the children in future.

Administration of medication:

4. Temperature reducing medication has been purchased and is stored out of reach of the children. The service will ensure this is available in the service at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the wiring removed.
2. Evidence of new taps purchased and photographic evidence of a lower temperature received.
3. Staff coats and handbags were removed from the care room and will not be stored in the care room in the future. Staff have been made aware of this.

Administration of medication:

4. Photographic evidence of anti-febrile medication.

Summary Comment

The corrective action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 23.

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

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(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) Fire drill records were reviewed. Evidence was available to show fire drills were practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed 13 January 2026.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated January 2026, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated January 2026.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The services fire evacuation procedure was displayed on the notice board.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

There was appropriate supervision of children for the duration of the inspection. There were two rooms in operation. There was adequate staff assigned to each room to ensure appropriate levels of supervision. The layout of both rooms and outdoor area allowed for clear lines of sight of the children. Children were encouraged to use the toilet independently and staff were within hearing range if required. Staff sat with children during snack time, ensuring appropriate supervision while food was being consumed.

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*

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Compliance Information

(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.

Non-Compliance Information

(c)

1. There was no means of heating the child sanitary areas. The temperature was recorded at 16.0 °C. In order to facilitate the care needs of the children the temperature of the room should be maintained between 18°C and 22°C. This was a non-compliance in the last inspection report from the 26 April 2023 where the registered provider had stated that the radiator in the toilet area had been switched on. This was not observed on inspection.

(d)

2. The toys in the outdoor area required cleaning. It is acknowledged that cleaning records were available and signed. Evidence that effective cleaning of the outdoor toys had taken place in the service was not available. The lack of cleaning posed a risk of infection to both staff and children.

3. No hot water was available from the sink in Room B as the hot water tap was not functioning. The children in this room were observed to wash their hands in cold water.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following response was received from the registered provider:

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The water and heating had been turned off the night prior to inspection due to new taps being installed. They have now been turned on and the heating has returned to normal.

2. The outdoors toys have been power washed and a new cleaning schedule is in place. The service plan to adhere to the cleaning schedule.

3. A new tap is ordered and the service is awaiting the plumber. The service will monitor all water temperatures and flow in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence of temperature records received.

2. A copy of the new cleaning schedule received.

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3. Order confirmation of a new tap and evidence that a plumber was arranged to complete the work was received.

Summary Comment

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