

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CE032
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Corofin Little Explorers Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	38 Laghtagoona Est, Corofin, Co. Clare
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<b>Eircode:</b>	V95 Y738
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lynda Burton
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/09/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	23	PM	6
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	Á. McCarthy
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Corofin Little Explorers Preschool is a sessional service located in the rural village of Corofin, County Clare. The service is located in an adapted, single storey premises within a residential area. The programme of care and education is facilitated in two care rooms. The service operates a morning and an afternoon session Monday to Friday from 08:45 to 11:45, 09:30 to 12:30 and 12:00 to 15:00 for children ranging in age from two to six years. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the service.

### Staffing

Four adults are employed by the service. During the inspection the registered provider and three adults were present and worked directly with the children. The current registered provider commenced on the 27 August 2025 and works directly with the children and provides an administrative role in the service. The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 6 to Level 8. The adult's engagement in continuing professional development was evidenced in the staff files.

### 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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 - Insurance

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report. 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 registered provider, the 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 person who is able to deputise when required.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy were available at all times during the inspection.

Four files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the three adults employed by the service. These included the following:

(2)(a)

Six written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)  
Where past employer references were not available, a reference from a source other than past employer was available.

(c)  
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the four adults currently working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)  
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)  
(a)  
One reference with evidence of validation was not available in respect of one adult.  
(d)  
International police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)  
The manager made contact with the previous employer in question to verify employment and reference validation. The procedure to have references validated prior to staff commencing in the service is detailed in the recruitment policy.

(d)  
The application for police vetting and a copy of communications with the Embassy with appointment to complete process on the 29 October 2025. The original disclosure will be submitted to Tusla upon receipt by the service. The procedure for staff to have police vetting prior to commencing in the service is detailed in the recruitment policy.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)  
(a)  
A copy of a written reference, a validation form and the recruitment policy.

(d)

Application for police vetting and a copy of communications with the Embassy with appointment to complete process on the 29 October 2025.

The recruitment policy.

### Summary Comment

Based on the corrective and preventive action the area of non-compliance is addressed under Regulation 9(2)(a). The non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) will be addressed upon receipt of the Police vetting clearance on the 29 October 2025.

### 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)

An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)

The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained during the inspection. Four adults worked directly with the twenty-three children in attendance in the morning and two adults worked directly with six children in the afternoon.

## 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

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. Two care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

#### Basic Needs of Children:

The children's learning, development, and well-being was supported by the adults who treated the children with respect. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, the children were praised and encouraged during all the activities. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's individual capabilities, needs and learning interests. The adults interacted in a kind manner with the children, listened attentively to their stories and questions, responding promptly with interest.

The children were supported to be independent, according to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, caring for their belongings and retrieving their lunches from their bags. Open ended play and educational activities predominated for the duration of the inspection, and the children were free to select which activities they chose to engage with. The children's language development and communication skills were supported through the positive and on-going conversations and visual aids observed during the inspection. The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their meal in a relaxed and unhurried environment. Lunchtime was observed to be a sociable occasion for the children who sat and conversed with their peers and the adults. The children transitioned independently from open ended play-based activities whilst been assisted in individual and group-based activities as required.

#### Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environment featured an appropriate range of equipment and play materials for the age range and developmental level of the children. The indoor care rooms were bright, spacious and colourful and decorated to reflect the children’s sense of identity and belonging. The walls displayed the children’s families, their birthdays, numerical and literacy aids linked to curricular themes which the children had been learning.

The layout of the indoor environment was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with. The room enabled the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level shelving, tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and tabletop activities.

The outdoor play area was accessible directly from the two care rooms to the rear of the service. The outdoor play area had a synthetic grass surface, and the surrounding perimeter was enclosed by fencing, a high wall and a gate. The play area offered the children a space to engage in physical, sensory and pretend play. This area included a wooden activity unit with a slide and climbing frame, a mud kitchen with a range of natural life equipment and a range of vehicles, scooters and balance bikes. Waterproof clothing and footwear were available and used by each child to support outdoor play in all types of weather conditions. The children were observed to thoroughly enjoy their time transitioning from the indoor to the outdoor environment.

### 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:

- A key coded, bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- Unauthorised adults signed in and out on the visitors record book.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

### Infection Control:

- The building was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were in place throughout the premises.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Photographic illustrations of hand hygiene techniques were displayed to prompt children to wash their hands.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, after using the toilet and on return from outdoor play and before mealtime.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The adults working directly with the children demonstrated an understanding of the administration of medication policy.
- Documentation was available for the adults to use should medication be administered in the service.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable and identified by the adults working in 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)  
An adult had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and the staff roster indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible and conspicuous areas in the two care rooms.

(b)

The first aid boxes were available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

## 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)(a)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The fire drill took place during the inspection on the 16 September 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment took place on the 12 November 2024, and the smoke alarm system took place on the 05 September 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices were displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for thirty-eight pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.