

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL050		
Name of Service:	Little V.I.P's Preschool		
Address of Service:	Old Commons School, The Commons, Killybegs, Co. Donegal		
Eircode:	F94 XY84		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lisa Boyle		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	29/09/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84		
Inspection undertaken by:	K Folan		
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	Non-applicable		

Description of service

Little VIP's preschool is a privately owned pre-school service located in a rural setting in the townland of The Commons outside Killybegs, Co. Donegal. The service offers sessional preschool for children aged 2 to 6 years, Monday to Friday from 9.30am-12.30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The pre-school service operates from the old commons school and comprises of one large care room, adult and children's sanitary accommodation and 2 auxiliary storage areas. Children have access to a separate outdoor play area at the side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider is not on the premises on a daily basis. Three adults are employed in the service, the person in charge, a named designated deputy person in charge and an adult who provides cover in the event of staff absences. There were two staff members working directly with children in the service on the day of inspection. One of the staff members is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25,26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The service failed to notify the Agency of the change to the person in charge. It was noted on inspection that the person in charge as notified to the Agency no longer works in the service on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A change in circumstances form was submitted to Tusla. The provider is aware that in future a change in circumstances form must be submitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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,.*

(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)

The registered provider ensured that:

- a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of inspection, two adults were present, the person in charge and one staff who was employed under the Access and Inclusion model.

Staff files in respect of 3 adults were reviewed and the following information was available:

- (a) Four written references from past employers for three of the adults.
- (b) Two written reference from a reputable source for two of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Two of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)

1. One written reference on file for one adult was from a source other than any of the past employments that were detailed in their employment history. References from sources other than a past employer are to be considered only where there has been no past employments.
2. One written reference had no evidence of validation.

(2)(d) It could not be determined Police Vetting for one adult was required due to gaps in the employment record.

(4) There was no qualification on file for one adult.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. Reference submitted.
2. Validated reference submitted.
3. Police vetting submitted.
4. Qualification submitted.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted
2. Photographic evidence submitted
3. Photographic evidence submitted
4. Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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 adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained at all times throughout the inspection.
On the morning of the inspection 2 adults cared for 9 children aged between 2 years and 7 months to 4 years and 7 months.

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*
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Basic Need

- The service had a healthy eating policy in place. Children’s lunches and snacks were brought in from home. On the morning of the inspection, children were observed enjoying sandwiches, crackers and a selection of fruits and yogurts. Lunch time was relaxed with staff members sitting with the children and engaging in social conversation.
- Children’s individual drink bottles were available to them throughout the session.
- Children were supported to use the toilet and handwashing facilities independently with staff providing support when required.
- Individual inclusion plans were implemented in line with the child’s own needs. The plans detailed the developmental stage of the child and the interventions needed by the staff to always ensure the child’s learning in the service.
- All children in the preschool had access to the outdoor area on the morning of the inspection.
- Waterproof outdoor clothing and wellingtons were available for all children for outdoor play.

Supporting relationships

- A key worker system was in place in the service with named staff assigned the responsibility for creating close relationships with children as evidenced through documentation.
- The inspector observed the staff speaking kindly to the children throughout the morning, praising the children’s efforts and achievements and offering comfort and support to any child who required it.
- Communication with parents is facilitated at drop off and pick up times which is used to exchange information with parents in relation to the child’s day and development.
- The staff members were observed to work well as a team, frequently collaborating with each other in relation to activities and children’s needs.
- Children spent time in small groups with each key worker, for example during a modelling clay activity the children and their key worker discussed what each child was making, as well as social conversation about the child’s interests.

Physical and material environment

- The preschool room contained a number of well-defined interest areas to develop all areas of children’s development. A home corner with play kitchen, wooden household items and a selection of dolls and buggies were available to the children.
- Materials were stored in trays on low level shelving which was within the children’s reach. The service used visuals to label each tray so children could identify the materials should they wish to access them.
- Sensory trays containing water and another, autumn leaves provided open ended play experiences for the children.
- An art area containing a variety of prewriting materials and open-ended junk art loose parts were available to the children.
- Children’s artwork was displayed on the walls.
- A range of books were available in a library area, and two child sized armchairs were available to provide a cosy space for the children to rest while reading.
- A fully enclosed outdoor play area to the side of the premises featured a selection of ride on trikes, balance bikes, scooters and tractors.

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 was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C in each of the sanitary areas.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with fencing and a bolted gate.
- Blind cords were secured with restrictors.
- Internal doors in the service were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.

Infection Control:

- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean.
- Cleaning schedules were up to date and available to review.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be ventilated by openable windows.
- The sanitary facilities were observed to be maintained and clean.
- Children's lunches which were brought from home, were safely stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of the inspection. On discussion with staff, the inspector was advised that no medication is administered in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- In the outdoor area, the fencing had become damaged, leaving parts of the wire exposed, posing a risk of injury to the children.
- Three of the ride on tractors were missing pedals. On one occasion, a child attempted to dismount one of the tractor's, slipped on the exposed metal pedal and fell off the tractor.
- The blue tricycle was missing two pedals, exposing the metal holder posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

- In the sanitary accommodation, paper towels were provided for handwashing however they were stored on top of a radiator posing, a risk of airborne cross contamination, reducing the effectiveness of and washing.
- In the sanitary accommodation, the pedal operated bins were broken and the lids were left beside the bins, resulting in used hand towels in open top bins, posing a risk of cross contamination to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Fencing has been repaired.
2. Broken tractor disposed of.
3. Broken tricycle disposed. Replacement pedals ordered for two of the vehicles.

Infection Control:

4. Paper towed holder provided in sanitary accommodation.
5. Pedal bin provided.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence provided.
2. Photographic evidence provided.
3. Photographic evidence provided.

Infection Control:

4. Photographic evidence provided.
5. Photographic evidence provided.

Summary Comment

Click or tap here to enter text. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

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) Two staff in the service were trained in first aid for children. At least one trained member of staff was always available to the children.

(2)(a)(b) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available in the service, stored in the preschool room. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position.

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) Records were available to evidence that the firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced on 10 September 2025.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A record of fire drills was kept by the service with the most recent drill carried out on 02 September 2025. However, records demonstrated that in the period from January 2025 to June 2025, there was one fire drill carried out on the premises in January 2025. Fire drills should be carried out monthly to ensure children are familiar with evacuation procedures in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire drills carried out and recorded in the logbook.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence provided.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection. This regulation is now compliant.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 22 children up to 27 March 2026.