

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR132
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Name of Service:	Barnardos Loughlinstown
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Address of Service:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Dublin 18
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Eircode:	A96 P3Y6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martin Hannigan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	18/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Barnardos Loughlinstown is a part time service located in South Dublin and is a registered charity. The service operates from a single-story building and comprises of two preschool rooms, a kitchen, a relaxation room, a parent room, a soft playroom, and sanitary facilities. Additionally, the service has an outdoor area to the side of the building. Care and education are provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years and opening hours are Monday to Friday from 9:30am to 1:30pm.

Staffing

There are currently 13 adults employed to work in the service including the person in charge, 6 programme assistants, a cook, 3 project workers, an administration assistant and a domestic assistant. On the day of inspection there were 6 adults present working directly with the children including a student on a work placement programme. The person in charge, the administrative assistant and the cook were also present.

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 and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (2) (a-d), (3), (4) Management and recruitment

Regulation 11(1) (2) Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1) (b) Health welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 (1), (2), (a)(b) First Aid

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

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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

(2) Following discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that seven adults commenced work in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 24 April 2022. Documentation required under Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of the seven adults as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all 14 adults working in the service.

(a) Seven written and verified references were available from past employers.

(b) Seven written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.

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

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of two adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the seven adults commencing work in the service.

(4) Documentation was available to show that four of the adults who work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. Three adults did not require a qualification.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were five adults available to 14 children in the morning and five adults available to 14 children in the afternoon.

The adult on the work placement programme was also present during the morning of the inspection.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered.

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

Children's needs were met consistently in a warm caring responsive manner, as a result children were observed to be content in their environment. Staff advised that the service provides breakfast and a hot meal each day.

Children were observed to eat their breakfast in an unhurried manner. During this time staff were observed to sit with children and encourage social interaction. Drinking water was available and accessible to children throughout the morning. Nappy changing was carried out on a schedule and as required, staff were observed to use this time

to engage in conversation with children ensuring a calm, positive experience. Children were encouraged and supported to use the toilet independently. Areas with rugs and cushions were available in the care rooms for children to rest and take a break from activities if required. Staff were aware of children's need to be active and provided a balance between physical activities and calm activities. All children had the opportunity to engage in outdoor play during the inspection.

The inspector observed interactions that reflected a culture of respect and inclusion where children's voices were heard. Staff were observed to listen and respond to children and actively involved them in decision making throughout the morning. They positioned themselves at children's level and used gentle tones and eye contact supporting children to feel safe and secure. Play was child led and staff extended children's learning using open ended questions to provoke critical thinking. Some children were engaged in small group play, while others chose to play independently and contently focused on their chosen activity.

The environment was print rich and had a variety of designated interest areas with low level shelving allowing children autonomy to choose items of interest with ease. For example, children had access to well-resourced home corners, dress up areas, construction areas, library areas, sensory areas, mark making areas, small world materials and a space with climbing frames and a ball pool. Staff were observed to sing songs and use puppets with children supporting language development. The outdoor space supported the development of children's gross motor skills and provided opportunity for risk taking. Children had access to items such as slides, a climbing wall, large cars and balls. A storage area containing a variety of additional materials was also available.

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:

- External doors were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised entry and the children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Window blinds were secured to the wall and made safe.

- Staff were observed to carry out visual risk assessments in the outdoor area prior to taking children outside.
- Cleaning products and antifebrile medication were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Pedal operated bins were in use throughout the service for example in bathrooms and the outdoor area.
- Liquid soap, warm running water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Effective hand washing was observed to control the spread of infection. For example, children were supported to wash their hands after using the toilet, before lunch and following nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated knowledge of the procedure to safely administer medication to a child and documentation was available for use if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were well marked and unobstructed during the inspection.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.

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) There was evidence to show that two adults hold certification in First Aid Responder (FAR) training and were available to the children during the inspection.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in the service.

- (b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on 08 July 2025.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms were serviced on 13 August 2025.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed around the building.