

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS050				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Littlebells Playschool				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Drumfinn Ave, Ballyfermot, Dublin 10, Co. Dublin				
<b>Eircode:</b>	D10 FH02				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Elizabeth Fagan				
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	24/10/2025				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>40</td> <td>PM</td> <td>n/a</td> </tr> </table>	AM	40	PM	n/a
AM	40	PM	n/a		
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N McEndoo				
<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Littlebells is a community-based service which is registered to provide sessional care for children aged from one to six years. Children currently enrolled in the service are aged from fifteen months. The early years service operates from 09:00 to 12:00 Monday to Friday. Care of the children is facilitated across four care rooms named Ladybug, Butterfly, Sunroom and the Rainbows, this room is also used as the afterschool room. The premises is a detached single story adapted community centre located in an urban residential area in Ballyfermot. Four care rooms, sanitary facilities for children and staff, a kitchen and an office are provided. There is a large enclosed outdoor play area located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

In total 11 staff are employed in the service including the designated person in charge. The designated person in charge does not work directly with the children and the registered provider does not work in the service. All staff working directly with the children have attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

### 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.

## Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 24th of October 2025 during the inspection in respect of Regulation 9(2)(c), Garda Vetting. Correspondence was received from the service on the 28th of October 2025 which adequately mitigated the risk identified., the contents of which will be discussed in the body of the report.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.*

*(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

(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)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection, and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that four new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. All new staff members worked directly with the children. In addition, Garda vetting for five staff member whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

The four files for new staff were reviewed, and the following information was noted.

- (a) 3 written validated references from past employers for 2 adults.

(b) 1 written validated reference from a reputable source for 1 adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 10 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Four 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)

The registered provider did not ensure that three staff files containing the documents referred to in regulation 9 (2) and (3) were available on the day of inspection therefore full compliance could not be determined in respect of these files.

From the three files reviewed the following vetting information was not available:

- A complete employment history was not available for two adult's files.
- (a)(b) Written validated references from past employers for two adults, or references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers.
- Garda vetting was not available for one adult on the day; an immediate action notice was issued in respect of same. It is acknowledged in their response that the service stated they had removed the adult from working directly with the children until such a time as that Garda Vetting is received, therefore mitigating the risk identified.

(3)

It was confirmed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out prior to one staff member being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service. For two staff members, it could not be determined whether the procedures had been carried out, as a record of their start date was unavailable on the day of inspection.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(3)

Garda vetting submitted for one adult and received on the 14/11/2025.

New checklists created to ensure vetting procedures are completed and start dates are recorded for all staff going forward. The registered provider has confirmed that no employee will work with children without vetting procedures being carried out in full, first.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copy of garda vetting submitted for one adult.

Completed CV histories submitted for two adults.

Written validated references submitted for two adults.

New checklist templates for a staff file submitted.

Start dates submitted for two adults.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

### **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.

## 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:*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

#### Compliance Information

(1)  
(j) The service policy states that children who are ill are not permitted to attend, and all medication must be administered at home. As a result, no medical records under this regulation were available at the time of inspection. This was evidenced through discussion with staff members, who demonstrated clear awareness and understanding of the policy. Further review of attendance records demonstrated minimal absences, supporting the implementation of the policy and indicating that children were generally well during their attendance.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service was observed to have a variety of equipment that was suitable to support various forms of play, including physical, imaginative, creative, and sensory activities. This range of equipment encouraged children's engagement and supported their overall development and learning. All equipment appeared to be well-maintained and clean throughout the service, indicating regular checks and appropriate hygiene. The furniture provided in each care room was appropriate to the age and stage of development of the children attending. This included child-sized tables, chairs, and storage units that supported children's independence and safety.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
    - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
    - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
    - (iii) an employee, or*
    - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
  - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) A record was maintained of all children of their times of entry and departure from the service daily.
- (3) A record was maintained on file for an unpaid individual, such as a visitor or authorised person, documenting their check-in and check-out times. This individual was authorised to enter the premises by a staff member.
- (4) On review of the visitors sign in book it was evident that the record was held for a minimum of one year from the date to which it was related.

### 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

The required adult-to-child ratio was consistently maintained, ensuring each child remained under the supervision of a qualified staff member. Staff were observed positioning themselves strategically within the room to support effective engagement and supervision. Their interactions reflected attentiveness and responsiveness, tailored to the individual needs of the children. Examples of positive engagement included staff bending to the child's level to offer comfort, initiating meaningful dialogue, and responding sensitively to children's cues.