

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS187
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Name of Service:	Barnardos Child & Family Service Millbrook
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Address of Service:	Millbrook Lawns Health Centre, St Dominic's Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 K3EV
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martin Hannigan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	09/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern
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	NA
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Description of service

Barnardos Child and Family Service provides a part-time early years service to children from the local community in Tallaght. The premises is located in Millbrook Lawns Health Centre. The children are accommodated in two main rooms named Twiggles and Dukes. Each room has access to a sensory room and sanitary facilities. A third room referred to as the 'indoor/outdoor area' is located between the Twiggles room and the outdoor area. The outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises. The service accommodates children aged 2-6 years, Monday to Thursday between 08:30 and 14:00. The children finished at 12:00 on the day of the inspection to facilitate a staff meeting.

Staffing

There are 15 staff employed to work in the service including the project leader, programme support workers, programme assistants, child and family development workers, project workers, administrative worker, a bus driver, a cleaner and a cook. An additional adult provides administrative duties on a voluntary basis.

Nine staff are employed to work directly with the children. Eight staff were working directly with the children on the day of the inspection.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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

Immediate Action Notice

Regulation 23: An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 9 June 2025 as loose cables and a blind cord were accessible to children posing a risk of injury. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 19 May 2022. A response was received from the person in charge on 10 June 2025 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk.

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.

(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) The registered provider ensured the staff were suitable and competent as outlined below.

(a) & (b) Appropriate consideration was given to references for all adults. References had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. All references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced for two adults for whom it was required.

(4) All staff employed to work directly with children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. There were 8 adults working directly with 14 children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

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

Basic Needs

Appropriate and suitable care practices were in place within the service. Children moved freely and engaged in child led play and activities. The service provided a breakfast and a hot meal. The children sat in groups with the adults when eating, engaging in conversation. The children chose what they would like to eat and were involved in setting the table and cleaning up afterwards. Drinks were always available within the rooms and were offered with the meals. Children were supported to wash their hands and clean their faces at appropriate times.

Staff supported the children to use the toilet when needed and the younger children's nappies were changed at a routine time. Staff reported the children's nappies are changed as needed in between. Transitions between

activities and care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The adults fostered positive relationships with children by offering support through attentive listening, responsive interactions, and gentle guidance. They addressed all the children by name and demonstrated an interest and awareness of the children's home lives through conversations with them. Staff discussed maintaining relationships with families to support children's emotional and social development. Children were observed being assisted by staff to regulate their emotions with staff providing support and comfort when children became overwhelmed or upset. Group activities such as shared meals and cooperative play were observed which can develop communication skills, strengthen social bonds and help children build friendships.

Physical and Material Environment

The indoor areas were laid out with designated interest areas including home corners, construction areas and arts and crafts areas. These were resourced with equipment and props to support imaginative and creative play and learning. Children's artwork was displayed showing the children's efforts and creativity are valued. All materials were visible and accessible to the children and included puzzles and small world toys. Play activities were observed to be child led. Both rooms had an adjoining sensory room, and a separate room 'indoor/outdoor room' was available next to the Twiggles room where children could spend time separate to the group as they wished. Areas with soft seating were available for children to rest or take a break from activities.

The outdoor area was sectioned into two areas which were surfaced with impact absorbent matting. Equipment was available to support various forms of play including a climbing frame with a slide and playhouse and ride-on toys.

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 entrance and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Cleaning products were stored out of children's reach. The kitchen was secured to prevent children accessing the hazards within. Records were available demonstrating fire drills were carried out monthly and staff demonstrated an understanding of the fire evacuation procedures.

Infection Control:

The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and well maintained and cleaning schedules were in place. Sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped to support handwashing. Staff were aware of when to wash their own and children's hands to prevent the spread of infection. The inspector observed children's hands being washed before eating and after using the toilet in the Twiggles room. Facial tissues were available for children to clean their noses if needed. Waste was properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal.

Administration of Medication:

The service had care plans available to guide staff in the administration of medication for two children whom this may be required while attending the service. Written parent/guardian consent was documented. Staff reported that they had not yet needed to administer medication to a child attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The registered provider did not ensure that loose cables were secured out of reach of children. The inspector observed an unsecured extension cord and lead from an electrical thermometer in reach of children in the Twiggles room and an unsecured blind cord and lead from lighting equipment in the sensory room adjacent to the Twiggles room. These posed a risk of injury if accessed by the children. This was non-compliant on the previous inspection dated 19 May 2022. An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 9 June 2025 due to the significant risk

posed and it is acknowledged that immediate action was taken. A written response was received from the person in charge on 10 June 2025 which was deemed to appropriately address the risk.

2. The registered provider did not ensure that firefighting equipment was easily accessible. The firefighting equipment was blocked from access with items including a plank of chip board and a folded clothes horse. This could delay access to the equipment in the event of a fire.

Administration of Medication:

3. The registered provider did not ensure appropriate management and storage of medication as follows:

a) Only one injectable medicine was available for a child for use in the event of an allergic reaction where there was a requirement for two.

b) An oral medicine for use in the event of a child having an allergic reaction had expired in February 2025 posing a risk of being ineffective as a treatment.

c) Three inhalant medicines and one injectable medicine were stored in a child's bag within reach of children. These posed a risk of injury if accessed by a child.

d) The three inhalant medicines and one injectable medicine were not stored in their original packaging posing a risk to the safe administration if required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.
 - Extension lead and electrical thermometer removed from Twiggles room.
 - Cable from lighting equipment in sensory room has been tacked to the wall and is no longer loose.
 - Cable for roller blind in the sensory room has been hung back on its hook.
 - Checking for loose cables added to daily checklist.
 - Issue of finding of non-compliance re loose cables has been discussed at our preschool meeting and requirements

for compliance discussed.

Preschool team have been reminded of their role in checking for cables that have become loose or dislodged, and to ensure that cables from new or temporary electrical items are secured and out of reach of children. The issue regarding fire equipment blockage has been discussed at our preschool meeting and requirements for compliance discussed. Checking fire equipment is part of the daily checklist and staff are reminded about their role and obligation to ensure fire equipment is not blocked.

Administration of Medication:

3.

(a) A second injectable medicine was obtained.

(b) A new (in date) bottle of oral medicine was obtained.

(c) We have installed a hook on the wall out of children's reach where this child's bag is now hung. A memo has been issued to ensure all staff know where the child's bag is to be hung.

(d) New medicine in its original packaging has been obtained.

We have developed a bespoke medication checklist so that the child's medication is checked each morning. We can then ensure the medication is present, in its original packaging and in date before the child gets to preschool. This will also enable us to raise any concerns immediately with the child's parent. We have discussed this at our preschool team meeting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1.

- Photographs showing removed/secured cables.
- Daily safety checklist template including loose cables.
- Copy of pre-school meeting agenda dated 12 June 2025.

2. Photograph showing fire extinguishers are easily accessible.

Administration of Medication:

3. Medication checklist template.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance.

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) A person trained in first aid for children was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person trained in first aid to be available to the children at all times of opening.

(2) (a) & (b) Appropriately equipped first aid boxes were stored in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms and the kitchen.

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 monthly fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 13 May 2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system. The most recent dates of maintenance recorded were 6 March 2025 and 14 April 2025 respectively.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a prominent position.

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 registered provider ensured the children were appropriately supervised at all times. The inspector observed staff providing close supervision of children within their rooms, when eating, when moving between the rooms and when using the sanitary facilities.