

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY109
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Name of Service:	Larkin Early Education Service
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Address of Service:	Ballybough Community Youth & Sports Centre, Ballybough Road, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D03 C995
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Tyrrell
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	11/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne and E Saini
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Larkin Early Education Service is a community service providing a full-time service to children aged from 2 to 5 years of age and operates from 8:30am to 2:30pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from the second floor of a multi-use community centre on the north side of Dublin city. There are two care rooms, namely, Butterflies (3- 5 years) and Hedgehog (3-5 years) rooms. An enclosed outdoor play area was available to the children in the service.

Staffing

The service employs ten staff members to include the service manager, the person in charge, a cook and seven childcare staff, one of whom is employed under a Community Employment (CE) scheme.

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, 16, 19, 23, 25 and 26; These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 Record in a relation to a preschool service, 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child. The scope of the inspection included the two care rooms.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the service manager, 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

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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

The files of 10 adults were reviewed,

(2)(a) Fifteen validated written references were available from a past employer.

(b) Five validated written references were available from a source other than a previous employer.

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

(d) Police vetting was available for five adults employed in the service who had lived outside of the state for six consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to demonstrate that the eight adults working directly with children in 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

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

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Compliance Information

- 1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 6 adults working directly with 21 children aged between 2-5 years of age during the inspection, with the manager and person in charge available in a supportive role.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were maintained on the day of inspection as outlined below.
- **Butterflies Room** - 3 adults were caring for 9 children aged 3 - 5 years.
 - **Hedgehog Room** - 3 adults were caring for 12 children aged 3 - 5 years.
- (8)(a) on review of the staff roster it was confirmed that two adults were present on the premises during the operation of the early years' service.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis was completed accurately On attendance record sheets.
- (i) Staff roster was available demonstrating hours each staff worked.
- (j) A review of eight medication administration records demonstrated that all the details were completed on each record.
- (k) A review of ten accident and incident records demonstrated that all the details were completed on each record.

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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:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals and a hot meal to the children. On the day of inspection, the inspectors observed a hot meal, served in the dining room, at 11.30am for the Butterflies room and 12pm for the Hedgehog room, supplied by an external food company, which was beef stew with roast potatoes. Breakfast is served at 9am, a fruit snack at 1.00pm and afternoon snack at 1.45pm. Additional and alternative food was made available to the children, if required.
- Lunchtime was observed as a relaxed and sociable event, with children given time to sit at low tables appropriate to their age. Children were observed to eat independently, but staff were on hand to help as required, supporting independence and wellbeing.
- Individual labelled water bottles were available in each care room for the children to drink from and water and milk was available in the dining room for mealtimes.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- The transitions between activities such as outdoor play to mealtimes and return to the care rooms for free play and play activities were observed to be calm and relaxed, with staff available to care for the individual needs of the children.
- All children had access to the outdoor play area for long periods of time during the inspection.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff were observed to have respectful, warm and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones, positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level, giving hugs and using kind and clear behavioural management communication and skills.

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- Staff were observed to be engaged with the children during outdoor play and indoor activities. They were responsive to the children and were observed to support the children with their play activities.
- Six care plans were available for children being observed by staff to help their ongoing additional development needs which included area of focus, action plans, review dates of action plans completed in detail by staff demonstrating understanding and knowledge of each child and their needs.
- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.

Physical and Material Environment

- The two care rooms were bright, colorful, and inviting and laid out in clear and identifiable areas of interest.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the care rooms were accessible in clearly laid out areas of interest and suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present.
- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- Cosy areas with soft mats and cushions were present offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The roof top outdoor play area which was located on the second floor was accessed from the main corridor of the service. The surface of which was covered with artificial soft surface and had a large wooden teepee structure to enable the children to shelter from inclement weather. The children could access a slide, mud kitchens, box of instruments, box of cars and trucks and dolls, with a room with additional play equipment available for the children.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entry to the community centre was monitored by a reception desk and the entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured and monitored by staff to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.

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- Room temperatures were kept between the recommended 18°C to 22°C.
- No trailing flexes were observed, blind cords were secure and cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean and suitable for use by the children.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, activities in the care rooms after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were available for waste disposal.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required in accordance with the service policy.

Fire Safety:

- Documentation available demonstrated that fire drills were completed in the service monthly. The emergency exit areas in the care rooms were observed to be unobstructed and clear of any obstacles during the inspection.

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) The service provided evidence that three adults trained in First Aid Response were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a) (b) First aid box was stored in the office which was an easily accessible and was available to the children in the service at all times.

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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 firefighting 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 reviewed by the inspectors for fire drills completed and the last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on the 26 February 2026.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment available demonstrated they were last serviced 13 October 2025 and for smoke alarms demonstrated they were last serviced on 3 February 2026.
- (4) The fire drill procedure was displayed on the doors of the care rooms and throughout the service.