

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY169
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Name of Service:	Poppintree Early Education Centre
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Address of Service:	Community Sports Centre, Balbutcher Lane, Poppintree, Ballymun, Dublin 11.
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernie Kelly
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	12/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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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, D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	JA. McKimm
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

The service was established in 2010 in the single storey community centre which is in a residential area of Ballymun. Part of the community centre is designated for the use of the preschool. There are two childcare rooms, the Discovery room, and the Sensory room. The service also has a reception area, an office, a kitchen and an outdoor play area. The service offers part time care and education to children from two to six years old. Opening times are from 9.30am to 14.30pm daily. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service. There are ten members of staff employed in the service including the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, an administrator, two cooks, a caretaker and four early years practitioners.

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 and health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

- Regulation 16(1)(j)(k) Record in Relation to Pre-School Service,
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

(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)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management showed that there are currently ten adults employed to work within the service. The files of ten adults were reviewed. The garda vetting of the registered provider was also reviewed.
- (a) There were eighteen written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eleven adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Six adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Disability, and Equality.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

(b) (c) Staff were unclear about the management structure who was assigned to person in charge and the deputy person in charge. Unclear management structures can impede decision making processes and hinder the operational management of the service.

(2) (a)(b) Two validated references were not available for one staff member when the files were reviewed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b) (c) A Change in Circumstance has been submitted to Tusla changing the name of the person in charge. The management structure has been reviewed, clarified and communicated to all staff. Regular management reviews to ensure staff know the reporting lines and responsibilities, supporting better decision-making and management of the service have been established.

(2) (a)(b) A reference has been obtained for relevant staff member. Recruitment and onboarding processes have been reviewed. A recruitment checklist will be filled out for each new hire and reviewed by management before prior to employment. Regular audits of staff files will be conducted to ensure all records are complete and meet regulatory requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1) (b)(c) Documentary evidence has been submitted.

(2) (a)(b) Photographic and documentary evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under regulation 9 have been addressed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) The registered provider ensured that staffing levels were adequate to respond to the individual needs of the children throughout the inspection. There were three adults caring for eleven children on the day of inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of six children's registration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured a full record (1) (a-i) was maintained for each child.
- (3) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Children were provided with regular meals and snacks on the day of inspection. This included two meals and one snack prepared and cooked onsite. On the day of inspection children were observed being served a selection of cereals and toast along with milk or water for breakfast when the service opened at 9.30 am.

At 11.00am children were served a selection of fruits including bananas, grapes, apples, strawberries and oranges. At 1.00pm ham and cheese sandwiches and yogurts were served for lunch. Children were observed to be offered extra portions. Water was accessible to children throughout the day.

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 inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured with keypad access to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children throughout the inspection.
- The enclosed outdoor play area was secured reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor play areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- All the furniture, toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition in the rooms.

Infection Control:

- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition. There were cleaning schedules on the wall of the care rooms and sanitary facilities.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to allow hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

- No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency and fire exits were signposted and unobstructed and staff were aware of the evacuation procedures and location of the assembly point.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Hand washing was observed to be at variance with the service hand-washing policy and was not in line with best practice. This was evidenced by the fact that children did not washing their hands after outdoor play and before mealtime. This posed a risk of cross contamination and infection.

Administration of Medication:

2. A comprehensive care plan outlining clearly the steps to follow in the event of a medical emergency for one child was not available. This posed a risk of safety. It is acknowledged that staff were aware of the issue and were working with the parent to develop a care plan.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Handwashing procedures were reviewed with all staff following inspection. Policy and signage relating to good hand hygiene is on display throughout the service. Staff retraining was conducted. Going forward management will regularly observe and monitor hygiene practices to make sure that both staff and children are following the procedures.

Administration of Medication:

2. A medical care plan for established for one child in consultation with parent. A management team took place regarding the establishment and review process for all medical plans. A revised healthcare plan template and checklist have been put in place to make sure all required information is included. Management will carry out regular checks and monthly audits of children's files to ensure all documentation remains current. Staff have also been reminded of the importance of maintaining clear medical care documentation and following these procedures.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Administration of Medication:

Photographic evidence has been submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under regulation 23 have been addressed.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (3) (a)(b) The inspector was requested to sign a visitor's book upon arrival at the reception area in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The attendance and departure of children from the service was not accurately or contemporaneously recorded. One child's attendance who arrived after the opening of the service was not recorded in the attendance book. This poses a risk to child safety, safeguarding and the operational management of the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The Attendance book was immediately reviewed and updated to ensure all children that were present were accurately recorded. All Lead Educators were reminded of their responsibility to record children's arrival and departure times from the service. Attendance records will be cross checked and head counts will be conducted throughout the day, and this process will be reviewed on a regular basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under regulation 24 have been addressed.

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) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on 29 April 2026.
 - (b) Records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place in February 2026.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.