

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL160
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Name of Service:	Little Caterpillars Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Fingallians GAA Club, Seatown West, Lissenhall, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 NX02
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Butler
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Service type:	Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	26/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	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
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

Little Caterpillars was established in 2013 and has been operated by the registered provider in this setting since April 2015. The service operates in a GAA club in Swords, Co Dublin. The service provides sessional childcare education and care to a maximum of 22 children aged from 2- to 6-year-olds. The current hours of operation are from 9.15am to 12.15pm Monday to Friday, operating inside the services registered hours of 9.15am to 12.45pm. The outdoor area is the use of the GAA artificial grass pitches to the side and rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider, who works in the service, employs three childcare staff within the service. On the day of inspection there were three childcare staff working directly with the children including the person in charge, one childcare staff and one staff member employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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 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, 15, 21, 23, 25, 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 Record of a Preschool child and the scope of the inspection was the one sessional classroom of the service.

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

(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) The registered provider ensured that-

- (a) the service had 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 was being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person was on the premises,
- (c) there was a clear management structure in the service that identified the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee.

2) The files of four adults were reviewed to include the registered provider, person in charge, one childcare staff, and one staff employed under the Access and inclusion Model as part of the inspection.

- a) One written and validated reference was available in relation to two adults and two written and validated references were available in relation to two adults from a past employer.
- (b) One written and validated reference was available in relation to two adults from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for four 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 for one adult had lived outside of the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the four adults who worked 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.

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)(3) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children, as there were three adults working with 19 children for the morning sessional service, ensuring ratios were maintained on the day of inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

On review of the documentation relating to a sample of ten children’s files within the service, the required information and detail was available and completed for each of the ten files reviewed.

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 room was a bright play space which enabled the children to explore their environment and play with materials.
- A range of play materials and equipment were present and suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service nurturing children’s independence, ability to make decisions, enabling exploration and develop their play opportunities.
- The furniture provided was low level and suitable to the needs and age of the children. There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the classroom.
- Each children’s identity and belonging were reinforced within the service classroom with the use of pictures of the children with their extended family displayed on the wall and with pictures of each child with their birth date. This can provide familiarity and comfort to children.
- Cosy areas with two soft couches and books for rest and relaxation were present.
- The children were provided with the opportunity of outdoor play time in the enclosed GAA pitch with artificial grass surface.

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 door of the service was locked preventing unauthorised access into the service and unauthorised exit from the service. The outdoor play area was secure, for outdoor play.
- Attendance records were completed and accurate.
- The pre-school children were supervised at all times during the session.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The temperature of the classrooms recorded were within the recommended ambient temperature of 18 - 22 °C.

Infection Control:

- The premises and equipment were visually clean.
- Liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed to wash their hands after toilet visits and before lunch.
- Children lunches which were brought from home, were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Lidded pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Thermostatically controlled warm water was not available in the sanitary facilities, water temperatures were recorded as follows:

	Temperature recorded	Time
Wash hand basin in sanitary facility directly off classroom	44.1 °C	11.05am

Wash hand basin in sanitary facility outside of classroom	45.3 °C	11.03am
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exceeding the recommended maximum of 43.0°C, leading to a risk of injury.

- At 11.30am, the record of attendance was not brought from the care room to the outdoor play area of the GAA pitch which was downstairs and across the carpark of the GAA grounds. This reduced the effective evacuation in the event of an emergency as there was no access to the record of attendance while the children were in the outdoor play area.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The water thermostat was adjusted on the day of the inspection and the temperature of the water was turned down with immediate effect. The service has purchased a water thermometer and are now checking the water temperature each morning to ensure the temperature never exceeds 43 degrees Celsius. A checklist has also been created and is present in the bathroom to ensure checks are completed daily.
- The staff were spoken to and it was an oversight on the day of the inspection. The register is normally taken out for outdoor play. The service has nominated the person who is on door duty each week to be the person responsible for taking the register outside for outdoor play. The service has created a checklist for the person to sign each time the children and staff go outdoors.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic Evidence.
- Photographic Evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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 two adults were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a)(b) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the classroom and in the event of an emergency and were available to the adults responsible for the children.

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 record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 9 January 2025.
 - (b) The number type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were available. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 28 May 2024 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 01 November 2024.
- (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 22 children with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.