

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL173		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Learners Creche		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Parslickstown House, Ladyswell Road, Dublin 15, Dublin.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 X2VW		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Geraldine Bush		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/01/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	28	PM 19
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8   D08 X01F		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Griffin		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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

Little Learners Creche is a community childcare service located in a single-story building in North Dublin. This childcare service is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to a maximum of 30 children aged 2 - 6 years between the hours of 8:30am and 5:30pm from Monday to Friday. The service currently operates between 9:00am to 5:00pm from Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

There are two care rooms in the service which include a toddler room for children aged 2-3 years old and a preschool room for children aged 2 years 8 months - 6 years old. Facilities also include a sensory room, a small kitchen which is located off the Toddler room. There is an enclosed outdoor play area available to the side of the premises. Sanitary accommodation is available for children and staff.

### Staffing

There are ten adults employed to work in the service. This includes the registered provider who is also the person in charge, the deputy person in charge, eight adults two of whom are employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and two of whom are employed under a community employment scheme. There are also two students on college work placement who attend the service one day a week and provide support in the care rooms in a supernumerary capacity.

On the morning of the inspection the deputy person in charge and seven adults were present. This included six childcare staff, one adult who is employed under a community employment scheme and two adults who are employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). The registered provider arrived shortly after the inspection began and remained on site to help assist the inspection process.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Record of a Preschool Child Regulation 15, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1) (a) and Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the toddler room and preschool room.

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 registered provider, deputy 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)

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A review of the roster showed that there is a designated person in charge rostered to be on the premises during the service operational hours.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.

(2)

A review of paperwork and conversation with the registered provider confirmed there are currently ten adults employed to work in the service. The staff files of the registered provider, deputy person in charge, eight adults

and two students were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) There were 19 written and validated references available from past employers in relation to the staff member employed
- (b) There were 5 written references available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the eleven adults and two students. 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 not required as there was documentary evidence to show that the ten adults and two students had not lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) The registered provider and eight adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

### 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)  
There was an adequate number of adults working with the children. During the morning there were seven adults caring for 28 children aged 2-6 years old. During the afternoon there were four adults caring for 19 children aged 2-6 years old.

(2)  
The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of the children.

### 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-*

- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of ten children's registration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured a record (1) (a), (b), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i) was maintained for each child. In addition, a space was available on the form to record the date the child ceased the service as required under (c).

(3)

Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

### 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

(1)(a)

##### Basic Needs:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals one of which was a hot meal for the children. All food was prepared on site. Discussion with staff showed that children are offered breakfast which includes cereal and a selection of fruit at 9am. Children were observed to be served crackers with cheese and a selection of chopped up fruit: banana, orange, apple and pear at morning snack time. Different dietary requirements were catered for, for example, at dinner time the children were observed to be served meatballs and mashed potatoes. There was an alternative vegetarian dish available if required and extra portions were offered.
- Water stations were available to provide children with drinking water and milk was observed to be available for drinking at mealtimes.
- There were cosy areas observed in both care rooms for the children to relax in as required. Each cosy area was equipped with a soft seating area, several cushions, a soft mat and a selection of books for reading and relaxation. In addition, there were seating and tables available in the outdoor play area for rest and relaxation for the children during outdoor play time.
- A sense of identity was promoted throughout the service. For example, there were 'Family Wall' displays, 'Birthday Time' displays and the children's artwork was displayed on the walls of the service. Additionally, in the preschool room there was an 'Animal Wall' display with photos of different animals that were associated with the children and their families.
- The presence of a sensory room located just off the preschool room provided the children with a safe space to go alone or accompanied by a staff member if they were feeling overwhelmed, over stimulated or just wanted some quiet time in a safe space with dimmed lighting. Staff discussed the benefits of using this room to help children to regulate their emotions. A staff member was observed to use this area to read a book to a child.

- The presence of an outdoor play area which was partially sheltered provided the children with an area that protected the children from harsh weather conditions such as rain and direct sunlight.

### Supporting Relationships:

- Language used by staff was observed to be kind and supportive. For example, a staff member was observed to speak in a reassuring and friendly manner to the child while changing the child's nappy.
- Children were observed to have the freedom to move freely in their care room and independently choose their activities and play experiences.
- Staff were observed to interact continuously with the children. For example, activity times and mealtimes were observed to be a sociable event and staff chatted amicably with the children.
- Children's language development was supported through conversations, activity times, singing songs and storytelling activities which were observed during the inspection.
- Children's autonomy and independence was promoted. For example, children were encouraged to clean up after snack times and tidy away toys before mealtimes.
- The transition between activities such as activity time and mealtimes were observed to be calm and relaxed with staff giving children a five-minute notice and additional adults were available to care for the individual needs of the children. Additionally, the presence of a visual daily routine on display provided the children with a sense of stability, security and predictability.
- The inspector observed staff greeting parents at collection time and updating parents verbally on their child's day in the service.

### Equipment and Materials:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms were low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- The care rooms had defined areas of interest with supporting equipment. For example, in the preschool room there was a home corner, dress up role play area, a transport area, a construction area, a building blocks area, an art area which was always accessible to the children and a fine motor skill area. Each area had supporting props for example the role play area had a variety of costumes and dress up props, and

the home area included a range of real-life props which promoted meaningful play experiences and extended play opportunities.

- The variety of materials and equipment observed in the care rooms facilitated a range of play experiences including creative, imaginative and language play and promoted exploration and curiosity. For example, children were observed to play at the water station which had aprons and props to promote fun play experiences, at another table children engaged in a mould making activity which included various shape cutters, at another table children were observed to do art activities. Whereas a child who did not want to engage in these activities sat on a mat playing with transport toys. There was a relaxed atmosphere in the rooms, and the adults were always nearby the children to offer support when required.
- The presence of an 'Emotion Corner' and emotion puppets supported the children to understand the different types of emotions. This promoted the social and emotional development of the children.
- The outdoor play area was divided into two sections one for the older children and one for the younger children. This area was covered in a soft ground surface. Equipment and toys available included a sand tray with props, building blocks, transport vehicles and an outdoor play kitchen with supporting equipment. Additionally, the shed in the outdoor area was equipped with various toys and equipment which could be used during outdoor play time. Staff discussed how children got to choose play equipment during outdoor activity time.

### 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 to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The inspector was asked to sign in the visitor book and show identification on entry.
- The outdoor play area was securely fenced and gated reducing the risk of 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.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.

- Blind cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were observed to be stored safely and inaccessible to the children.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.

### Infection Control:

- Foot operated pedal bins were observed to be used by children and staff for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained throughout the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- The premises was observed to be clean and hygienic.
- Water bottles used by the children were individually labelled.

### Administration of Medication:

- Antifebrile medication was in date and stored safely in its original box in a place that was inaccessible to the children.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire evacuation exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection. The children's attendance book was monitored to ensure staff knew how many children were present. This ensured a safe evacuation of the children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

1. A part of the surface area of the hand-washing basin unit in the sanitary area was observed to be broken. This posed a risk of injury.

### Infection Control:

2. The soap dispenser holder and hand-washing basin unit were observed to be worn with the paint faded and wood exposed. This posed a risk of cross infection.
3. The handwashing water in two of the three hand washing basins in the children's sanitary accommodation was not warm to support effective hand washing. It is acknowledged the deputy person in charge, and the building manager took immediate action by calling out a plumber. In addition, children were guided to use the one working hand basin in the sanitary area and to another hand basin in the care room which had warm water.

- The nappy changing mat used for nappy changing was observed to be torn with foam exposed. This posed a risk of cross infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

- All damaged and broken casing surrounding the wash hand basins has been fully removed and replaced with new casing. The new casing has been properly sealed and painted to ensure durability, hygiene, and ease of cleaning. This item will be formally incorporated into our future premises risk assessments and routine maintenance inspections. Regular visual checks will be scheduled to ensure any wear or damage is identified and addressed promptly before deterioration occurs.

##### Infection Control:

- The defective soap dispenser shelf that exposed wooden backing has been removed and replaced with a new shelf for the dispenser and is now suitable for washroom use. All bathroom fixtures and fittings will now be included in the bathroom risk assessment and maintenance checklist to ensure materials remain sealed, hygienic, and fit for purpose. Routine inspections will be conducted to prevent recurrence.
- A calibrated temperature probe has been purchased to allow accurate monitoring of water temperature at both handwashing sinks. Regular temperature checks will now be carried out and recorded. If water temperature falls below the required standard, alternative compliant sinks will be used immediately for handwashing until the issue can be resolved. In addition, Management are currently reviewing the hot water supply system serving this area. Qualified plumbers will be consulted to assess the existing system and provide recommendations and quotations for improvements to ensure a consistent and compliant hot water supply. Ongoing monitoring and documentation of water temperatures will form part of routine of the service hygiene compliance.
- The damaged nappy changing mat was removed from use immediately upon identification of the tear. It has now been replaced with a new, fully intact mat that is suitable for hygienic use and can be effectively cleaned and sanitised. Management will ensure that a spare nappy changing mat is always kept on the premises to allow for immediate replacement should any damage occur in the future. Nappy mats will be included in routine room and equipment checks to identify wear and tear at an early stage. Any mat showing signs of damage will be removed and replaced straight away to maintain hygiene standards and compliance.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the refurbished hand-washing basin unit and documentary evidence of risk assessment and daily checklist to include this area.

#### Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence of new soap dispenser shelf and documentary evidence of risk assessment and daily hygiene checklist to include this area.
3. Documentary evidence of risk assessment and daily hygiene checklist to include this area.
4. Photographic evidence of new nappy changing mat and documentary evidence of risk assessment and daily hygiene checklist to include this area.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions provided by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliances under Regulation 23.

## 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 registered provider ensured that a record of fire drills which were evidenced to occur monthly in the service was maintained. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on the 14 January 2026. The registered provider-maintained records relating to the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting was last serviced on 28 August 2025. The smoke alarms were last serviced on 30 October 2025.

(3)

Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire safety records requested by the inspector were available for review.

(4) Notices detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire emergency were displayed on the wall in the care rooms. The fire assembly point was displayed across from the building.