

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL178
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Name of Service:	Little Moo-Moo's Playschool Ltd
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Address of Service:	Skephubble farm, St. Margarets, North County Dublin.
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Eircode:	K67 X0V1
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	11/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Roads West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	L.A Webster
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 Moo-Moos Playschool Ltd. is a privately run service located on a working dairy farm in a rural area of North County Dublin. The service is registered to provide full daycare for children aged 2-6 years from 7:30am-5:30pm Monday to Friday but is currently operating reduced hours until 4:30pm. The service consists of three care rooms; two of which were open on the day. The Bunnies pre-school class caters for children aged 2.8-5 years. The Fledglings class caters for children aged 3-6 years who require specialised preschool support. A large indoor activity area referred to as the Haybarn is located to the rear of the service along with a number of enclosed outdoor areas which are accessed directly from each of the care rooms. Additionally, there is an office and sanitary facilities available.

Staffing

The registered provider works within the service and employs 11 staff including 1 deputy person in charge, 4 administrative staff, and 6 childcare staff. On the morning of inspection there were 12 adults present, including the registered provider, the deputy person in charge, 6 childcare staff, and 4 administrative staff.

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.

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 a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster evidenced that either the registered provider or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was further evidenced through discussion with staff.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with the person in charge showed that there are currently 12 staff employed by the registered provider to work within the service. The files of 2 new staff who had commenced employment following the previous inspection on the 22 May 2024 were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff that are currently employed within the service.
- (a) There were 2 written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were 2 written and validated reference from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) There was no evidence to suggest that either adult required Police vetting.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that all one staff member who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed of equivalence 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) On the morning of inspection, there were 27 children being cared for by 7 adults in the morning and 23 children cared for by 6 adults in the afternoon. Additionally, the registered provider was available to provide supports in the care rooms as needed.
- (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 within the rooms.

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 twelve children's records were reviewed as part of the inspection. All records contained the required information as required under (a)-(i) above.

(3)

- (c) All child records were available for inspection.

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.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- Individually labelled beakers of water were available to the children at all times.
- Children had their own designated placemats for lunch time.
- Daily routines were positioned throughout the care rooms, highlighting what the children were engaging with on the day, and were gently reminded by staff throughout the morning.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to be kind, respectful and caring towards their interactions with the children, which created a calm and nurturing atmosphere within the service.
- A strong sense of teamwork was identified throughout the inspection and staff ensured that this was modelled to the children to support their ongoing learning.
- Lunchtime was observed to be an engaging experience for the children as staff sat with them and engaged in a range of conversations. For example, a staff member was discussing ice-skating with a group of children and how fun it can be.

- Staff consistently ensured that children’s voices were heard this was evident throughout the inspection when staff ensured to listen to the children’s individual questions and curiosities.
- Throughout the inspection, children were engaged in various musical, sensory, and reading activities to support their developing language and fine motor skills.
- Transitions throughout the inspection were observed to be smooth and considerate, for example, children were gently prepared and directed to the haybarn and the staff ensured to explain to the children what was happening

Physical and Material Environment:

- The care rooms were spacious, bright and decorated with various forms of the children’s arts and crafts. There was a clearly designed family wall and birthday wall with pictures of the children’s families displayed.
- Play areas were designated and themed to invite children to engage in their chosen area.
- Toys were documented as developmentally age appropriate for the children and in good condition.
- Children were observed to play independently with the materials and sought support from staff when needed.
- Adequately sized chairs and tables were available to the age and developmental stage of children who wished to engage in tabletop activities.
- The outdoor equipment was in good condition and provided fun learning experiences 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:

- The entrance to the service was secure upon arrival which prevented any unauthorised persons accessing the service. A number of gates which were fitted with bolt locks provided small containment areas throughout the grounds of the service which ensured safe movement of the children between the classrooms, outdoor areas and the haybarn. This prevented children leaving the service unnoticed or accessing unsafe areas.
- The care rooms were in good condition, with no visible hazards or trailing wires observed.

- Blind cords were securely attached to the wall and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and locked away out of reach of children.
- Shelving units were firmly anchored to the wall to ensure stability and safety.

Infection Control:

- Upon arrival, it was observed that the service was clean and hygienic and up to date cleaning schedules were available and observed within the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and wall mounted paper towels were available for appropriate hand washing practices. Both staff and children were observed to show familiarity with routine handwashing after play time, and before lunch time.
- Children's lunches were brought from home and were observed to be appropriately refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 16-22°C was maintained within the care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of inspection. Through discussion, staff were familiar with the practices required for the administration of medication to children attending the service.
- Observation showed that medication was stored safely, in date and out of reach of children.
- In discussion with staff, it was evident that they were aware of medical care plans for children and where the emergency medication is stored. In addition to this, staff were aware of the procedures to take in relation to potential anaphylaxis and the administering of emergency treatment if the event occurred.

Fire Safety:

- All fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

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 registered provider ensured that the deputy person in charge was trained in First Aid Response (FAR), expiry date of January 2026 and was immediately available to the children attending the service. Additionally, the registered provider ensured that three staff held up to date FAR certification and were immediately available to the children as needed.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, and unobstructed if needed to access quickly.
 - (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times to the adults caring for children attending the service.

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 the 25 November 2025.
 - (b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm systems in the premises.

- Records demonstrate that the firefighting equipment had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place on the 06 June 2025
- Records demonstrate that the smoke alarms have been serviced on a quarterly bases with the last service taking place on the 24 November 2025.

(4) A visual notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was consistently displayed around the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the pre-school service was adequately insured, with an expiry date of 27 March 2026.