

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015GY053

Name of Service: Buttons 'N' Bows

Address of Service: The Orchard, Moylough, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

Eircode: H53 Y294

Name of Registered Provider: Anne Scarry

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 03/03/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	71	PM	62
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Children & Family Agency, H.R Building, Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel and S. Meehan
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Buttons 'N' Bows is an early years care and education centre established and in operation since 2006 providing full day care, part-time and sessional services. While registered for children aged 0-6 years of age the service currently accommodates children aged from 6 months to 6 years of age. Opening hours are Monday to Friday, 07:00 to 18:15, for 51 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme operates within these hours, school term time only.

The service is located on a residential estate in Moylough, a rural village in the northeast of county Galway. It operates from a purpose built two storey childcare facility which has six care rooms available, three of which are located on the ground floor namely, Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2 and Toddler. On the first floor there were three care rooms, Junior Pre-school, Senior Pre-school and Pre-school. There were two designated sleep rooms in operation off Wobbler 1 and Toddler care room. Wobbler 2 was converted into a designated sleep room after lunch. Children in the three preschool care rooms were offered stackable beds if a child needed to rest. A kitchen, office, staff room, adult and children's sanitary areas, a nappy changing room and a dining room, were also in use in the service. The two outdoor play areas, accessible from the Toddler and Wobbler care rooms, were situated at the rear of the service. Car parking was available at side of the service.

Staffing

There were 24 adults employed in the service including the registered provider, manager and deputy managers, 1 cook, 1 kitchen assistant and 1 cleaner.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, managers, 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.

(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, in so far 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and a manager and deputy were available as required.
 - (b) The registered provider, manager and deputy were present when the inspectors arrived at the premises. All three were available throughout the inspection process.
- (2) Since the last inspection on 25 June 2025 two new staff members had commenced employment in the service. Renewal of garda vetting for one existing adult was also reviewed.
- (a) Two of the four required validated references were from previous employers.
 - (b) The remaining two validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the two new employees and the existing employee demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

- (d) Documentation available evidenced that overseas police vetting disclosures were not required.
- (4) One adult employed to work directly with the children held a major award at level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education. The second adult did not require a childcare qualification.

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(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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met.
- There were 15 adults working directly with 71 children in the morning and 62 children in the afternoon.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that the registered provider ensured that there were two adults available during the operating hours of the service.

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:

- The service promoted healthy eating. The hot food at lunch consisting of ham, potatoes and vegetables and snacks were provided by the service. Parents/guardians of children attending on a sessional basis in the pre-school care rooms supplied the morning snacks. All food was observed to be healthy and nutritious and children's dietary requirements were taken into account. Staff stated that breakfast provided consisted of oat and wheat-based cereals.
- Individually labelled bottles and cups were easily accessible to the children in each of the care rooms. It was observed at outdoor play that adults brought the water outdoors for children who were thirsty.
- Each care room had access to appropriate cutlery and crockery for the age and stage of development of the children in the care rooms.
- Rest areas were provided in each care room. These were observed to have soft furnishings for children who wished to sit away from noisy activities or who wished to rest.
- Adults were observed to respond to children's cues throughout the day. Examples included children's toileting needs, completing tasks and emotional support.

Supporting children's relationships:

- It was observed that staff communicated effectively throughout the day. Examples included messages passed on regarding children's non-attendance, planning activities and sleep needs of the children.
- A key person approach was stated as being in place with staff assigned responsibility for the observations of a designated group of children. These were available on the digital application and were furnished to the inspector.
- Various forms of communicating with parents/guardians was stated as being in use, including a personal messaging application and a digital application where staff inform parents of the children's daily routines

including eating, sleeping and toileting. Staff stated they communicate with parents at drop off and collection and this was observed by the inspectors on the day.

- Transitions between activities in the pre-school rooms and the outdoor play areas were observed to be well planned and carried out in a gentle caring manner. This in turn made the experience for children calm and organised.
- During mealtimes and tabletop activities the adults sat with the children and engaged in conversation promoting a relaxed atmosphere.
- It was observed that the entrance door to the service had materials which promoted cultural inclusion of all children. An example included a welcome sign with a flag of each country.

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 main entrance door was secured when the inspectors arrived. It was operated with a keypad. When pressed the door was answered in person by the manager preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service and children leaving unsupervised.
- The staff room door and the manager's office door located on the first floor were secured to prevent children from entering unsafe areas. Keys were hung out of reach of the children.
- Open windows in the care rooms were fitted with restrictors ensuring children could not fall or exit from them.
- The highchairs in the Wobbler 1 and in the dining room were fitted with suitable safety harnesses and footrests ensuring the children could sit comfortably and not climb out of the chairs while sitting.
- Blind cords in the Wobbler 1 and Wobbler 2 care rooms were secured with hooks placed out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving throughout the building which were inaccessible by the children.
- Steel support beams in the outdoor area were fitted with foam padding to prevent children from harm while playing in the outdoor area directly accessible from the Toddler and Wobbler 2 care rooms.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by the adults and children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water ranging in temperature between 39.6°C and 40.6°C. Sanitary facilities were supplied with dispensing soap, paper towels for drying hands and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Dustpans and brushes in the care rooms were stored out of reach of the children.
- Tissues were easily accessible for children's personal hygiene needs, helping to prevent the spread of germs. The adult assisting the child to wipe their nose in the Toddler room was observed washing their hands after disposing of the tissue in the pedal operated bin.
- Cleaning records, recorded on a digital application, were completed and up to date.
- Children's belongings including bags and coats were stored on labelled hooks with photographs and in cubby holes off the floor areas.
- The nappy changing areas were fitted with changing mats which were clean and in good condition. The children's personal belongings including nappies, labelled creams and nappy sacks were all located in individual areas within arm's reach of the adults. Nappy changing was observed to be carried out in line with best practice and the service policy.
- Children's training toilet seats were observed to be placed up off the floor area when not in use in the Toddler sanitary area.
- There were pedal operated, lined, lidded and self-sealing nappy bins in use in each of the nappy changing areas.
- Single use disposable adult gloves and aprons were available in each changing area to prevent cross contamination.
- Children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times throughout the day. Adults were nearby to provide assistance, if required.
- All cots were fitted with waterproof mattresses which allowed for effective cleaning.

Safe Sleep:

- There were three sleep rooms in operation. There was a large, designated sleep room with 10 cots and 5 stackable beds for use for Toddler and Wobbler 2 children, where children were aged from 18 months to 3 years and 6 months. A second sleep room with 3 cots and 2 stackable beds for Toddler and Wobbler 2 children and the third sleep room for the Wobbler 1 children aged 12 months to 24 months was fitted with 4 cots. Stackable beds were also available for older children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years of age who required rest/sleep in the pre-school rooms upstairs.

- The required temperatures for children under and over 2 years of age was in line with the service policy and best practice. Appropriate lighting, ventilation, space between cots and stackable beds were maintained.
- It was observed that children were supervised by an adult in the care rooms and designated sleep rooms during sleep time. The service kept 10-minute physical sleep checks on the childcare application. Records for all sleeping children included a record of the room temperature and the position, colour and breathing of the child as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy. These were reviewed and met the requirements.
- A supply of clean linen was available for each child. All linen provided was clean, dry and stored in containers within the sleep rooms.
- Cellular blankets, which allow air to circulate, were used for all children under 2 years of age.
- In each care room, quiet rest areas with child sized seating and soft matting were available for children to rest during the day.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There were two emergency fire doors to the side of the building which led out to an open gate. Neither of the fire doors were alarmed or the gate secured to prevent a pre-school child leaving the building into the estate or accessing the main road. This may pose as a safety risk to the children attending the service.

Infection Control:

2. Children's perishable food in the three pre-school rooms were not stored in the service fridge, posing a risk that the food may spoil.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statements were received from the registered provider:

General Safety:

1. Staff members attended fire training and the two fire doors have been secured. Staff have been reminded of the importance of ensuring that the gate is secured while the children are attending the service.

Infection Control:

2. A staff meeting was held and a reminder sent to staff in regard to children's snacks being removed from their bags, placed into zip locked bags, labelled with each child's name and stored in the fridge.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of an invoice was submitted confirming the activation of the alarms on the two fire doors. In addition, a copy of correspondence reminding staff to ensure the outside gate is secured while the children are attending the service was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Infection Control:

2. A copy of the correspondence reminding staff to store children's perishable food into the fridge was received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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) Ten First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates, which were all in date, were available to evidence that the ten adults had FAR training completed. The staff roster evidenced that at least two adults were available while the early years children were on the premises.

(2) (a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available throughout the building and in the office. These were accessible while the early years children were present in 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.
- (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 inspector observed that written records were available of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The record of the most recent fire drill was dated 27 February 2026.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service along with the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment certificate was recorded as 07 January 2026 and smoke alarm certificate was dated 16 May 2025.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm records were open to review on the premises on the day of inspection.
- (4) The notice of the fire drill procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located throughout the building.