

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY136
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Name of Service:	Little Blossoms Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Camp Street, Oughterard, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91RX64
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Geoghegan Tierney
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	21/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	n/b
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A- (1st Floor-Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Nic Dhonnacha
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).

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Description of service

The service operates from a two-storey building in the village of Oughterard, Co Galway. The programme of care is registered for Monday to Friday providing full day care for preschool children aged one to six years old. The preschool is also operating a sessional service between 08.45 and 12.15 and a school age afterschool programme from 13.30 to 17.30. The preschool service consists of three playrooms- the Junior Preschool room on the ground floor (for children aged 3-4 years), the Toddler room on the first floor (for children aged 2-3 years) and the Senior preschool room (for children aged 4-6 years) on the first floor. On the day of inspection two of the three playrooms were in operation during the morning session. Currently the demand for the Toddler room is from Monday to Wednesday. The preschool has designated outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises. The service offers a child led curriculum that focuses on the interests of the children.

Staffing

The registered provider is involved in the day-to-day operation of the service. Five employees work in the service including the registered provider who works directly with the children. One of the five employees works as an auxiliary staff member during the mornings and works with the school aged children in the afterschool programme. Documentary evidence was available for the staff members engagement in training and education.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 number Record of a Pre School 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 registered provider, 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.*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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) On the 21st of May 2026, the registered provider was the person in charge. A named person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b) The registered provider and the named deputy person in charge were available at all times during the inspection.

(2) Five files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider, person in charge, two childcare workers and an auxiliary staff member employed in the service. The findings included the following:

(a) Seven written and validated references were available from a past employer.

(b) Three written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

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- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for five adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was not required as no adults employed in the service had lived in another State for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Four adults working directly with the children held Early childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 and Level 6 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.*
- (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) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (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) During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) On the 21st of May 2026, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained.
In the Junior Preschool room there were 8 children aged 3-4 years of age being cared for by 1 staff member.
In the Senior Preschool room there were 13 children aged 4-5 ½ years of age being cared for by 3 adults.
The Toddler room was not in operation on the day of inspection.
Additionally, an adult worked in the mornings as an auxiliary.
- (8)(a) The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service during the hours of operation.

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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) to (i) The service held records for the children enrolled in the service. The records included the required particulars outlined from (a) to (i).
- (3)(a)(b)(c) The children's registration forms were available for review in the service by the relevant people outlined under (a)(b)(c).

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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) The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. Two care rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

- The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, engaged with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort.
- The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet.
- The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development.
- A healthy eating policy was in place. All food was provided by the parents and guardians.
- The children were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent and mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and unhurried. The adults offered praise and encouragement to the children.
- The children had the freedom to move about in each playroom to the various areas of interest.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

- A key person approach was observed in each playroom, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's preferences, interests and individual capabilities. The adults followed the children's lead in the playrooms and the children were supported in individual and group play.
- The rooms accommodated visual routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care.

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- The children were notified and consulted in advance of changes in the activities. The transitions in the programme of care were completed cohesively in a calm manner in the care rooms. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the programme of care and education.
- The adults communicated informally with parents/guardians on messaging systems and during collection periods.
- The children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities, and the children were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities in the indoor environment.
- The children were heard talking to the staff members about special places they visited and spoke of the empire state building and famous buildings of interest. Other children were sitting together looking at books about caterpillars, they asked questions and discussed their life cycle.

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:

- A secure bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within. The children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in the record of attendance book.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined foot pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet and before mealtime.
- No child wore a nappy on the day of inspection.

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- The designated nappy changing area was equipped with clean intact changing mats, airtight, foot pedalled lidded bins and two wash hand basins.
- The children's perishable food items were stored correctly in a refrigerator.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a cosy corner available in each care room for the children to take a rest or relax.
- The service had a designated floor bed for any child under two who required a sleep or rest.
- No child showed any cues of tiredness during the morning session.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes and fire assembly point was identified with signage.

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) Four adults had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and a record indicated that an adult with First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available in the service at all times.
- (2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous area in the service kitchen.
- (b) The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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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) Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 28th of April 2026.
- (b) Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 24th of June 2025 and 4th of August 2025.
- (4) A fire action notice was displayed in each care room demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (b) safe and secure,*
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (b) The main entrance door was safe with a secure system in place. The outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises had secure boundaries and gates in place.
- (c) The room temperatures were maintained within normal limits with openable windows in each room to allow adequate ventilation. The rooms were adequately lit with both artificial light and natural sunlight through the windows.
- (d) The service was clean with adequate records maintained to support the ongoing cleaning on a daily basis of the indoor environment and outdoor area.

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- (e) There was one toilet and wash hand basin for use on the ground floor, with three toilets and three wash hand basins available for the preschool children on the first floor.
- A designated nappy changing area was available with two wash hand basins.
 - There was an adult toilet with a wash hand basin available on the first floor.