

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015GY144

**Name of Service:** Little Rascals

**Address of Service:** Shannonbridge Rd, Creagh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway

**Eircode:** H53 X727

**Name of Registered Provider:** Claire McGreal and Miriam Murphy

**Service type:** Part Time, Sessional

**Dates of Inspection:** 23/09/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	40	PM	13
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency. 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor St Mary's HQ, Castlebar, Co Mayo. F23HP58
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

The service is based in a detached premises in the outskirts of Ballinasloe, in the east of county Galway. The service has 3 playrooms- the Junior, the Senior and the Multisensory room. There is also a kitchen/office. Quiet rest areas are provided in each of the pre-school rooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chooses to. There are 3 stackable beds for any child attending the part time service, requiring sleep provision. Quiet rest areas are provided in both playrooms. The preschool children have access to secured outdoor play areas at the rear of the premises. The pre-school caters for a maximum of 44 children aged 2- 6 years, from Monday to Friday.

### Staffing

There are 6 staff employed to work in the service including the 2 registered providers who are involved in the day to day running of the service.

### 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 regulation 15.

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 providers, 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.

(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) One of the registered providers was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the registered providers and the person in charge were on the premises and facilitated the inspection.
- (2) Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered providers, it was confirmed that there were 6 members of staff employed in the service.
- (a) There were 9 written and appropriately validated references available from their most recent employer.
- (b) There was 3 written and appropriately validated reference available from a source other than recent employer for 2 adults working in the service.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosure was not required for the adults working in the service as there was none who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over 6 months.
- (4) The 6 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

### 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) There were 5 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Senior room: Two adults cared for 21 children aged 3 -4 years of age.
- Junior room: Three adults cared for 19 children aged between 2 – 3 years of age.

In the afternoon there was 13 children between the ages of 2-4 years with 4 staff members caring for the children.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

### 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.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

The inspector reviewed a random sample of 10 children’s records. The records contained the required details as laid out under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required information was made readily available for inspection in the service by the registered provider on request.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that the records are retained for the required period of 2 years.

## 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

##### Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack provided by the parents/guardians which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills. Children from the junior room had their snack outdoors in the sheltered picnic area.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day. Children moved freely between indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- Children had the opportunity to engage in small group sensory play in the sensory room. Children were observed to make play dough and enhance their fine motor skills with scooping and pouring in the sensory box.

##### Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

- The staff were actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child’s individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion, for example using personal greetings, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them and talking to the children in a variety of ways- discussing, modelling and initiating games and activities.
- Small group play opportunities were encouraged and facilitated within the sensory room. This provided staff with opportunities to get to know the children better, quieter play time and a sensory rich experience.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Whole grapes were present in a child’s lunch box. Whole grapes are a choking risk to preschool children.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

A copy of the Healthy Eating policy was reissued to parents and guardians with an emphasis drawn to food safety. In addition, a message was sent to all parents and guardians with a reminder to cut up grapes. Staff will monitor all children's lunches and snacks.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

Documentation submitted to the Inspectorate.

### Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance found on inspection.

### 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 written record was available to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke detection system, with the last annual service 2<sup>nd</sup> September 2025.
- (4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation notices setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in each of the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026, was for a part time service, for a maximum number of 49 children. The insurance covered the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings,
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.