

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY145
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Name of Service:	Little Rascals Day Nursery & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Shangort Road, Knocknacarra, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 H9T2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Colette Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	15/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	40
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
Title:	Early Years Inspector.

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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).

Description of service

The preschool service is in a purpose-built crèche, located in Knocknacarra in the suburbs of Galway city. It provides a full day care service from 08.00 to 18.00 and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme from 09.00 to 12.00, from Monday to Friday. The service caters for children aged between 1 and 6 years of age. There are six playrooms in total- the Caterpillar room, Bumble Bee room, Ladybird room, Montessori room, Butterflies room and the Rainbows room. Meals are prepared and cooked in the service kitchen and a dining room is available for meals. There is an outdoor play area located to the side of the service for children. Parking is provided at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are a total of six adults currently working with the children which includes the registered provider. There is also an administrator and a cook employed in the service. A student was also on placement on the day of inspection. Six adults have a recognised childcare qualification at a minimum of a level 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care 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 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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.
- (7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:
- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that both the designated person in charge and deputy was on the premises while the pre-school children were present.
- (c) A management structure was available in the service and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

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Since the last inspection on the 03 July 2026, 5 new adults were employed in the service and 1 student was on placement. These files were reviewed and one garda vetting renewal for another adult.

- (2)(a) There were 7 of the required 12 written and validated references from previous employers.
- (b) The remaining 5 of the required 12 written and validated references were from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for the five new adults employed in the service, student and for the one adult requiring a renewal of garda vetting every three years. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew.
- (d) International police vetting was available for six adults working in the service who had lived in another State for a period longer than six months.
- (4) There was evidence that three of the six adults who required a childcare qualification had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework for qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. The other three adults which included a student who was on placement, a chef and administrator did not require a qualification.
- (7)(a) All six new adults had documented evidence of induction training and that they had signed off on the service policies.

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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) The staff roster indicated that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (2) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. There were 6 adults working directly with 43 pre-school children in the morning and 6 adults working directly with 40 pre-school in the afternoon. There was also a student on placement.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two adults on the premises during the operational 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, and*

Compliance Information

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Cutlery and plates were given to children during snack times.

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- The children had access to a water on a low-level table which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. The main hot meal of the day was sausages and vegetables.
- Hand washing was observed at appropriate times throughout the day, it was observed prior to snack time, after outdoor play and toileting.
- Each child's privacy and dignity were respected while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required by adults.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches in a designated rest and relaxation area in the playrooms.
- Children were observed at tabletop activities, sensory play, playing in the clearly defined interest areas, arts/crafts, in circle time and preparing their concert for graduation. The children enjoyed the outdoors riding tricycles, playing together and playing in the sheltered area.

Programme of Activities

- The service had a programme of activity and curriculum in place to support the individual needs of each child in line with their age and stage of development.
- Through the programme of activities children had the opportunity to interact in small and large groups. Children were given the opportunity and encouraged by adults to take the lead and engage with their peers.
- There was evidence of short-, medium- and long-term planning, this was informed by observation carried out by the key workers.
- Communication with parents was through the multimedia application that the service used and at drop off/collection times.
- The themes of the week were 'Spring & The Colour Green'. Visual displays were on the walls to assist with the themes and children's artwork.

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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 service was secured upon arrival. A buzzer system was in place to allow for the safe entry and exit of the children and to prevent unauthorised adults from entering.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and a wall to protect the children within.
- Cleaning agents, mops, brushes and medication were secured out of reach of the children.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to the children.
- The emergency exits were unobstructed to allow easy exit in the event of an emergency.
- All cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Perishable items belonging to children were stored in the service fridge.
- Anti-bacterial liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined, pedal operated bins for the disposal of paper waste were provided.
- Children were observed washing their hands before snack times, after toileting, after wiping their nose and after outdoor play.
- The hot water was maintained at a safe temperature of 32.4 °C in the children's sanitary area.
- The nappy changing area was clean; each child's belongings were labelled and there was a self-sealing leak proof pedal bin available.
- The correct procedure was observed at nappy changing in line with the service policy. There was a supply of aprons, gloves and anti-bacterial soap for effective hand washing.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication was stored in a press and was in date. There was a form to be filled out and signed by a parent or guardian.
- There were two adults with first aid responder training. The trained adults were available on the day of inspection to the preschool children.

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Safe Sleep:

- Ten cots and nine stackable beds were available for sleep and clean bed linen was provided for each one. Soft seating was also available in the playrooms for children to relax and rest during the day.
- Children were put down to sleep if required and physical sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes. If children did not sleep, structured down time was part of the routine. Soft seating was also provided in the playrooms for children to relax or rest during the day.

Fire Safety:

- There was evidence that fire drills were carried out monthly.

Outing:

- Outings were not carried out by the service.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had an in-date certificate as a first aid responder.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box, with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was carried out on the 26th of March 2026.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service date on the 20th of June 2026.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system had the last annual service date on the 15th of August 2025.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that all children were appropriately supervised, when attending the service. On the day of inspection, adults supervised children by both sight and sound to ensure children's safety. The adults were observed supervising children in the outdoor play areas, during mealtimes, at toileting and in the playrooms. Adequate supervision took place at sleep time on stackable beds and in the designated sleep room.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had in date insurance for 46 preschool children on a full day care basis which was valid to the 27th of March 2027.