

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK004		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ballyhall Kindergarten		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Ballyhall, Callan, Co. Kilkenny		
<b>Eircode:</b>	R95 AN27		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Medb Lambert		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	28/01/2026		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	21	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate. Ely hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

This part time service is in a rural setting in south county Kilkenny. A service is provided to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8.45am and 12.45pm. The premises is a purpose-built preschool service built in the Steiner tradition and situated on its own private grounds. There are two preschool rooms, a kitchen, hallway, and a large outdoor area for the use of the children attending.

### Staffing

There are nine staff employed in the service. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. All staff who were working directly with the children held the minimum of level 5 and above in early childhood care and education on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

### 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

- Regulation 9 management and recruitment,
- Regulation 10 policies and procedures,
- Regulation 11 staffing levels,
- Regulation 17 Information for parents,

Regulation 21,  
Regulation 22,  
Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of child,  
Regulation 25 first aid,  
Regulation 26 Fire Safety.

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.

## Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the service on the day of the inspection in relation to Regulation 9 (c) Garda vetting. It is acknowledged that the required Garda vetting certificate was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate on 4 February 2026.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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*

*(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;*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

#### Compliance Information

**(1)(a)(b)**

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. There was also a person available to deputise if required.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were nine staff employed in the service. The students file was reviewed and found to include all necessary documents required.

All required written and validated references were available on file for all staff working in the service.

(c)

There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for eight staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for eight staff.

(d)

Police vetting was available on file for one staff member who had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with preschool children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

(7)

The manager had ensured that all employees were supervised and provided with appropriate information. Staff who spoke to the inspector were clear in their understanding of the policies and procedures in place in the service. For example, staff were clear in their understanding of the behaviour management policy in place in the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(9)(c)

There was one staff member who was working directly with the children who did not have Garda vetting in place. It is acknowledged garda vetting was received by the inspector for the staff member shortly after the inspection.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The service will ensure going forward that no staff member will start work in the service until garda vetting is in place for the staff member.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of the staff members garda vetting was received by the inspector and is now available on file in the service.

### **Summary Comment**

The response and evidence submitted is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

### **Part III – Management and Staff**

#### **Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service**

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### **Compliance Information**

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5 available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on healthy eating and the behaviour management in the service. These policies and procedures were complete and specific to the service.

### **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)  
There was at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the children attending the preschool service during the inspection. There was a student in the service who was available to assist the qualified staff in the rooms if required.

(2)

At 10.30am

There were 21 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff.

The manager who does not work directly with the children was also available in the service to assist with the inspection.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 17 – Information for parents

*A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).*

#### Compliance Information

The parents of children were given an information booklet when they accepted a place in the service. The inspector reviewed the information given to them. The service provided parents with information as required under regulation 17. The information provided for parents contained an outline of the curriculum, the hours of operation, contact details and the facilities available within the service. There was also information included on funding schemes available for parents to apply for.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The equipment and materials provided both in the preschool rooms and outdoor area were presented and maintained to provide for the play and learning needs of the children attending the service.

Children in Seomra Blathana room were observed enjoying free play. There was a supply of arts and crafts materials in the room for all the children to use. There were frames which the children could use to develop their imaginations by placing on the ground and pretending to be in a boat for example. The room had drapes suspended from the ceiling giving a soft focus to the room.

Seomra solas was also resourced with natural materials and play equipment for the children. There was a small room just off the main room which had a selected range of Montessori equipment such as wooden blocks and wicker baskets containing natural products such as pinecones and twigs.

Of note was the extensive use of natural materials throughout the two preschool rooms. For example, there was a supply of wooden toys and baskets made of willow. There was original artwork displayed made of hearts and paper which children had prepared using folded paper like origami. There was a mobile made of twigs and folded paper. There were puppets for the children to play with. There was a home corner which was resourced with miniature kitchen equipment for the children to play with.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place. The service provided all meals and snacks for the children attending the service. There was a weekly menu on display. On the day of inspection children enjoyed a bowl of porridge and platters of fruit for their morning snack. They were given water from large jugs in the rooms.

### 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:

Access to the service was gained through the front gate which was secured on arrival and remained secure for the duration of the inspection. The outdoor areas in the service were safe, suitable and secure.

##### Infection Control

The service was clean. There were daily and weekly cleaning schedules maintained. The service had an infection control policy. Staff were vigilant in attending to children's personal hygiene during the day. The staff were observed to be attentive in supporting the children in washing their hands before meals, after using the toilet and after messy play. There was warm water to support hand washing, liquid soap, disposable hand towels and foot pedal operated bins provided across the service.

### Administration of medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy. The policy was reviewed by the inspector and was found to contain the required aspects for the safe administration of medication in a preschool setting. Previous records of medication that had been administered in the service were reviewed by the inspector. It was clearly documented; the consent was signed by the parent, and the document of the administration procedure was verified and signed by two staff members.

### Outings

The service did not facilitate outings.

## 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)

There was a person trained in first aid responder course immediately available to the children attending preschool service. There was evidence that there were three staff trained in a first aid responder course available to the children attending the service, which was sufficient to cover across the rota in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position available to the 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 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)

There was a record of fire drills which had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out in January 2026.

(1)(b)

There was a record available to demonstrate the number type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service. This maintenance was last carried out in June 2025. The smoke alarm was also last serviced in June 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the hallway of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service who were present on the day of inspection.