

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY074
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Name of Service:	Little Stars Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Beenreigh, Abbeydorney, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 XH66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Breda Fitzmaurice
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	07/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V94 XT5F
Inspection undertaken by:	S O'Brien
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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Little Stars Pre-school is a privately owned early years service based in Abbeydorney, Kerry. The service is located adjacent to the registered providers residence. The service consists of one care with an interconnecting door to a small room. The service has sanitary facilities and a large outdoor area to the rear of the building. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. The service offers a part time service along with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from 8.40am to 1.40pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service which includes the registered provider. The registered provider works directly with the children in the service. On the day of inspection, three staff were present.

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. 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.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge, and a named person was available to deputise if needed.
 - (b) The registered provider and the named person were present for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure within the service, and the staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Three staff files were reviewed including the registered provider.
- (a) One of the references available were from a past employer and were validated.
 - (b) Five of the references available were from a reputable source and were validated.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all three staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived outside a state for longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) All three of the staff members held a relevant qualification in early childhood care and education from level 5 to level 7.

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 registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of staff caring for the children during the inspection.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection and met the minimum adult to child ratio:

- In the morning, there were 17 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the afternoon, there were 10 children aged between 3 and 4 years being cared for by 3 staff members.

(8)

On review of the staff attendance records and roster, it was observed that there was a minimum of two staff members on the premises at all times while the service was in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1) The following records were reviewed:

(i) A staff roster was available and outlined the start and finish times for each staff member.

(j) Medication administration records were available and were observed to be completed with the relevant information.

(k) Accident and incident records were available for children attending the servicing and were completed with the relevant information.

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) Basic needs

- The children were observed to freely moving around the care room taking part in activities of their choice.
- The children were observed being supported by the staff with toileting and nappy changing, while also supporting independence. This was also observed when the children were putting on their coats to go home.
- The children's parents and guardians supplied the snacks and lunches which consisted of sandwiches, crackers, fruit, yoghurts and bagels. Individual water bottles were also available to the children to keep hydrated throughout the day.
- Care plans were available for the children who required them. The service had the appropriate equipment and adapted the environment to ensure each child was included within the environment. The registered provider outlined the importance of an inclusive environment for all children.
- A large outdoor area was available to the children with various materials such as ride on cars and bikes, a digging area, sand pit, a grass area with swings and a tunnel for children to learn in and explore.

Supporting relationships

- There was a strong sense of teamwork between the staff in the service and the staff supported each other throughout the day when needed.
- The children had created pictures of their homes and family pictures were displayed on the wall. This supported the children's sense of identity and belonging.
- The staff ensured they were at the child's level when communicating with them.
- The staff were observed showing empathy towards children when they displayed signs of emotion.
- The staff gave cues to the children when transitions were taking place.
- Mealtimes were a relaxed experience for the children. The children were given the time to sit and enjoy their food while chatting to the other children and staff.

- The registered provider outlined the importance of partnership with parents and guardians and ensured the service communicated with the parents and guardians on a regular basis. The staff were observed chatting to the parents at collection times.

Programme of activities

- The children were observed colouring in pictures of ducks with crayons which supported their gross motor skills.
- The children were observed painting pictures and mixing paint colours which supported them in learning about mixing paint and the colours they make. This also supported the children to use their imagination.
- The children were observed making birds' nests using straw and glue which supported the children's sensory development and fine motor skills.
- The children were observed reading books after lunch and partaking in circle time which supported literacy and communication skills.

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 to the service was secured and prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised and also prevented any unauthorised access to the service.
- The outdoor area was observed to be a safe and secure area for the children to play in.
- Cleaning products were observed to be stored out of reach to the children on inspection.
- The toys and equipment were observed to be in good condition and free from pinch points during the inspection.
- Blind cords were observed to be out of reach to children on inspection.
- Anti febrile medication was available in the service if required and was stored out of reach to the children during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Perishable food items from the children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator to prevent food spoilage.

- The children were observed washing their hands before meals, after activities and toileting. Warm water, hand soap and paper towels were available in the sanitary areas. Water temperatures were recorded between 33.1°C and 34.5°C which allowed for effective handwashing.
- The care room was naturally ventilated to allow for air flow throughout.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered during the inspection. On discussion with the staff, they outlined the steps they would follow in the event of medication being required to be administered.

Fire Safety:

- During the inspection, the fire exits were observed to be clear and free from obstruction.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that all the children in attendance in the service were checked in and out on a daily basis.

(3)

(a) The inspector was requested by the registered provider to sign the visitor book on arrival and departure to the service.

(b) There was a written record available of the entry of any other visitors to 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 written record of the fire drills that were carried out in the service. The fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on 19 December 2025.
 - (b) There was a record available of maintenance carried out on the fire firefighting equipment in the service which took place on 22 January 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure was displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The service had no records available of maintenance carried out on the smoke alarm system since 26 October 2024. This posed a safety risk to the children and staff present in the service in the event of a fire occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective Action

The electrician has come and completed the annual service to the fire alarms and emergency lighting in the service and no faults were found.

Preventive Action

The registered provider will ensure that the annual inspection from the electrician well in advance to avoid waiting. A reminder will be placed on the registered providers phone.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documented evidence of the services fire safety book was submitted outlining the service of the fire alarms took place.

Summary Comment

The registered providers response and documented evidence was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.