

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD013			
Name of Service:	Teach Leanbh			
Address of Service:	Longford Road, Soran, Ballinalee, Co. Longford			
Eircode:	N39 H424			
Name of Registered Provider:	Margaret Connell			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	19/05/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	38
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.			
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan			
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	Not applicable.			

Description of service

Teach Leanbh is a full day care service, located in a purpose-built premises in the townland area of Soran, near Ballinallee, Co. Longford. The service is registered to operate from 8.00 am to 18:00 hrs Monday to Friday. The service caters for pre-school children aged 0 – 6 years. The service is also registered to provide school age care. There are four care rooms, a sleep room, a sensory room, a kitchen for the daily preparation of meals, an office and a staff room

There are three spacious outdoor play areas available to the children.

Staffing

The service employs fifteen adults including the registered provider who was present on the day of the inspection. All adults employed and working directly with the pre-school children in the service had completed a major award in Early Childhood Care Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Fifteen adults including the registered provider and thirteen core staff were present on the day of the inspection. Of the fifteen adults present, this included ten adults who were working directly with the preschool children, the registered provider, the office administrator for the service and the cook were and two transition year students were supernumerary.

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 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, 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
- (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) There was a designated person in charge.
 - (b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
 - (c) All the staff members were aware of the management structure, the lines of authority and their roles within the service.
- The records of eighteen staff members were reviewed.
- (2)
- (a) Thirty-six written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference were available in respect of eighteen staff members whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all staff members. 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 in place for three adults employed who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Fourteen adults working directly with the children held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) There were fifty-one children attending the service being supervised directly by ten staff members during the inspection, two relief staff members were available to provide support and assistance to the rooms if required throughout the day.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection, this was verified by the up-to-date staff roster.

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 entrance gate to the premises was electronically secured and the entrance door to the service was secured and managed by staff members to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised or unauthorised entry. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Staff members in each room advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

There was documentary evidence available that indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed daily and reviewed by the registered provider to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the care rooms. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. The staff were observed washing their hands also.

Nappy changing practices were consistent with the nappy change procedure for the service. Plastic aprons, disposable gloves and nappy sacks were available for hygienic nappy change practices. Specific sealed foot pedal operated bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of soiled nappies and one nappy change was observed carried out in a hygienic manner for infection control purposes.

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal and containment of used tissues in each care room.

Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. The staff were observed cleaning sleep mats before the bedlinen was put on and the outdoor toys and equipment before each group of children came to the outdoor area for outdoor play.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. The staff members were familiar with the required practice when administering medication in the service. Medicine was safely stored.

Safe Sleep:

There was one sleep room with four cots available for children less than 2 years of age and twelve sleep mattresses were available for all children aged over 2 years requiring sleep. There was an adequate number of cots and sleep mattresses available to provide needs led sleep for young children. The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance and the required care of sleeping children including 10-minute sleep check observations for all sleeping children which was recorded in the sleep log.

Comfortable rest areas were available for the children in each care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service conducts outings. An outings policy was available.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspector's visit to the service was documented in the visitor's book on arrival.
- (4) The registered provider confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) Staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
 - (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the service.
 - (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for 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 firefighting 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 fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 28 April 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was serviced on 22 May 2024 and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 16 May 2025.
- (4) Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

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

Children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the staff caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, in the sanitary areas, during transitions and in the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 68 children.