

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK031				
Name of Service:	Buttercup Childcare				
Address of Service:	Main Street, Ballylanders, Co. Limerick				
Eircode:	V35 P228				
Name of Registered Provider:	Georgina O'Brien				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	16/01/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>29</td> <td>PM</td> <td>12</td> </tr> </table>	AM	29	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick				
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne				
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
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Description of service

Buttercup Childcare is a full day service located in the village of Ballylanders in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday from 07:15 to 18:15 pm for the preschool children aged from 2 to 6 years of age.

The service operates from a refurbished retail premises located on the main street of Ballylanders. The service has 3 playrooms, adult and children's sanitary facilities, an office and kitchen on the premises. There is a large outdoor area to the rear and back of the premises.

The service is registered for 56 preschool children including 12 children aged from 2-3 years to attend throughout the morning. This number changes in the afternoon due to the attendance of the school aged children assigned to the designated upstairs playroom.

Staffing

There are 9 staff and the registered provider working in the service. The staff and the registered provider hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from Level 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

On the day of the inspection there were 9 staff members and the registered provider working with the children in the preschool 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, safety, premises and facilities.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 9(1)(a)(b)(c) 2(a)(b)(c)(d)(3) (4)

Regulation 10

Regulation 11(1)(2)

Regulation 19(1a)

Regulation 23

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was informed by information received into the inspectorate office.

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider and the deputy were present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) Since the last inspection of the 11/10/2024 there were 4 new staff members employed in the service in the year 2025. All the staff files were reviewed including the student, who was not present on the day. The student has been attending a day each week since October 2025.

(a) There were 15 written and validated references from previous employers available for the members of staff members employed to work at the service, including the student.

(b) There were 5 written and verified references submitted by staff from other sources where past employers' references were not available.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for the new staff employed in 2025, all other staff members, and the student. The Garda vetting for the staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was available for the 2 staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All of the above documentation was furnished to the registered provider prior to each new staff member taking up employment at the facility.

(4) All staff members working directly with the preschool children had childcare qualifications.

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 and procedures available in the service which the registered provider, the deputy manager and staff members were currently in the process of updating.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate number of adults working directly with the children in all 3 care rooms on the day of inspection.

On the day there were:

Hive Room: 2 staff members present with 6 preschool children (2-3yrs)

Old Barn: 3 staff members present with 12 preschool children (2yrs 8mths -4 yrs)

The loft: 3 staff members present with 11 preschool children (3yrs -5 yrs)

In the afternoon there 3 staff members present with 12 preschool children availing of part time and full day care.

The registered provider was available to assist if required.

(2) The adult child ratios were correct in the care rooms as observed during the inspection.

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 services objective was to ensure that each child's learning, development and well-being was supported, taking all children's individual interests, needs and stage of development into consideration.

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service to encourage and educate the children about the importance of good nutrition. The service supplied a hot meal for the preschool children attending parttime or full day care. Children's drinks were easily accessible to them throughout the day. The staff sat with the children during mealtimes to give examples of positive social skills. The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed during the

mealtime in the Preschool rooms. Each child was given plenty of time to eat and enjoy their drink and meal without being rushed.

A nappy changing facility was accessible for the younger children who required nappy changing in the Hive and Barn preschool playrooms. Nappies were changed in a timely manner. Children had unrestricted access to the toilets which were located next to the Hive and Barn playrooms. For the children attending the Loft preschool room a staff member accompanied each child as the facilities were located downstairs a distance away from the playroom. Foot pedal operated, lidded bins were used for the safe disposal of used tissues. Staff were available to assist children if needed. Staff were heard using the appropriate language surrounding toileting and nappy changing. Children were encouraged and supported to develop good personal hygiene skills. Hand washing was observed by the children and staff following toileting, outdoor play and before meals times.

Lots of soft seating and rest areas were evident in each room for children to relax and rest, if time away from active play was needed. Each child's need for sleep in the Hive playroom was met when they were tired.

At sleep time 3 of the children used low-level beds to take a rest and staff remained in the room while the children slept.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The Hive room was a bright spacious room which provided the children with lots of clear floor space for movement and play. Lots of soft floor mats, pillows and cushions were available to create quiet rest areas within the room. The children sat independently at low-level tables and chairs available for dining at dinnertime and for tabletop activities. Outdoor play was facilitated in an area adjacent to the room. Children dressed in wet suits and wellingtons when heading outside to play.

The Junior ECCE 1 and Senior ECCE 2 preschool rooms (Barn and Loft rooms) were subdivided into interest areas using low level open shelving units. Lots of age-appropriate, open ended play materials were easily accessible to the children. Children's artwork was displayed on the walls around the room. A home corner with cooker, dolls, prams, and utensils provided an area for imaginative play. Low level tables and chairs were accessible for mealtimes and for tabletop activities.

The atmosphere in each room was unhurried and encouraging and children in each room appeared content and all were actively engaged in numerous activities. Large outdoor areas were located around the perimeters of the building. Here children had opportunities to develop gross motor skills while running, balancing, climbing, gardening, digging and using ride on toys. A range of materials were available to support children's play, movement, learning and exploration exclusive to the outside

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 ensured that the safety of the children was paramount, and the facility was regularly checked to ensure proper safety standards were maintained both internally and externally. A risk assessment of all areas was carried out on a regular basis, most recently in January 2026. A list of each item checked, the internal and external areas checked and the persons responsible for carrying out the checks were documented. These lists were signed and dated.

Infection Control:

A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in all areas of the service. A written cleaning record was available showing that all areas internally and externally were cleaned on a regular basis. All toys, play materials and equipment available to the children were cleaned at the end of each day. No broken toys or equipment were noted on the premises.

Administration of Medication:

The person in charge and the relevant staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on administration of medication in the service.

Safe Sleep:

The service and the relevant staff members had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on safe sleep for the children over 2 years of age who required a daily sleep.

Fire Safety:

The frequency of the fire drills were adequate and the staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities when undertaking fire drills and general fire safety. There was evidence of the fire safety policy and staff had a clear understanding of the requirements of the fire safety policy.

Outing:

The service had not undertaken any outings from the service involving staff members, parents and their children.