

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK057
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Name of Service:	The Beehive Play Learn Grow Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Well Lane, Rathkeale, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 F7PN
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Name of Registered Provider:	Méabh O'Kelly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection	06/02/2026
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Date 2 of Inspection:	09/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	72	PM	83
Day 2	AM	81	PM	94

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
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Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

The Beehive is a private, full day childcare service operating in the centre of the town in Rathkeale in Co. Limerick. It offers a service to children of all preschool ages. It is opened Monday to Friday, from 7.30am to 6.00pm. The service operates from a purposely designed, single story building with an additional 2 preschool rooms recently added to the facility. The building includes a Baby/ Wobbler room, a Toddler room, a Playgroup room, a Junior Pre-school room, a Senior Preschool room, and a Sessional Preschool room. Also accommodated in the building is a manager's office, a kitchen and a dining area, sanitary accommodation, nappy changing areas and a designated sleep room. There are 2 well-resourced outdoor play areas located on the grounds of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider is the manager of the service. There are 20 additional staff employed to work at the facility. There is a person employed to work in the kitchen to prepare, cook and serve fresh meals each day. All staff have achieved a major award 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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.

(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) A designated person in charge of the service was available on day 1 of the inspection and the registered provider was present on the day 2 of the inspection. There was always a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider or the assigned deputy were present, and the staff roster indicated that a named person in charge was identifiable each day.

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

(2)(a) All staff files were reviewed. There were two written and validated references available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 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 available for 11 staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

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 at all times there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at the pre-school service.

(2) On day 1 of the inspection there were 72 pre-school children with 16 qualified staff present. The adult child ratio was correct in all rooms.

On day 2 of the inspection there were 81 preschool children with 20 qualified staff present. The adult child ratio was correct in all rooms.

There were at all times relief staff available to replace staff while taking meal breaks. A designated person was available to prepare, cook and serve food to all children attending 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

Basic Needs

The service implemented a healthy eating policy, ensuring children received nutritious foods and snacks freshly prepared on site daily. Breakfast was provided for early arrivals, while dinner featured a nutritious hot meal with alternative choices available to accommodate individual dietary requirements. A 3-week menu plan was provided to all parents with details outlined of various choices for morning snack, main meal and 2 afternoon snacks. Second helpings were available at all meals, and water was offered with each meal. While dining, staff were observed sitting alongside the children, fostering sociable mealtime interactions.

Nappy changing facilities were adjacent to both the Baby and Toddler rooms, featuring waist-high changing units, maintained in good condition and equipped with easily cleaned mats. Steps were available for older children's accessibility. Procedures for nappy changing were posted on facility walls. Children's toiletries were stored in open shelving units, clearly labelled and accessible to staff. Handwashing stations were located next to changing units, and pedal-operated lidded bins ensured safe disposal of all waste. Low-level sinks in many individual rooms further supported hand hygiene among children.

The service provided designated sleep rooms. Each child under two years has cot access as needed. Lighting in sleep areas was dimmed to optimise sleep conditions, and room temperatures were consistently monitored for safety. Children over two years who requiring naps used low-level beds and sleep mats. Staff closely monitored all sleeping children, recording and documenting all sleep checks.

Children got to spend long periods outdoors each day with two large designated outdoor play areas accessible. Sheltered outdoor spaces facilitated outdoor activities in all weather conditions.

Physical and Material Environment

The Baby room was spacious and well-lit, featuring soft mats for floor play, low seating for rest, and comfortable areas for staff to sit and hold children. Equipment included lots of age-appropriate toys stored on low, open

shelving. Push-and-pull toys encouraged walking and climbing, while stationary toys assisted with standing and gross motor development. A family wall exhibited family pictures at a height suitable for children to engage with. The Toddler room offered generous floor space, a home corner with kitchen units, utensils, dolls, and prams for imaginative play. Construction materials, open-ended play items, puzzles and sensory materials were easily accessible. Quiet areas in the room facilitated rest and relaxation spaces for children to respite in if tired. The Playgroup room and the 3 Preschool rooms were well designed and equipped, tailored to individual needs, providing sensory materials, building blocks, imaginative play materials and lots of art and craft supplies. Children’s artwork and educational posters were displayed at eye level in all rooms. Room layouts were periodically adjusted based on children’s evolving interests and developmental stages. The many and various interest areas in the rooms supported small group activities, large group projects and individual engagement between staff and children.

Outdoor play areas were directly accessible from the Toddler room for younger children and from the Preschool rooms for older groups. The playgrounds were safely secured with high walls and steel fencing, grassed areas, and rubber matting to minimise injury risks. Various ride-on toys, low-level slides, swings, and jungle gyms promoted gross motor development.

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 internal and external doors to the premises were secured at all times. Staff inside the main building allowed access to all who entered the facility. The children in the junior and senior pre-school rooms were dropped to their individual rooms from the entrance gate in the playground. This gate was opened for drop off and for collection and outside of these times it was securely locked. This prevented any child gaining access to the outside carpark and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children. All toys and play equipment were assessed and were noted to be in good condition and free from pinch and crush points. All hazardous cleaning agents were stored out of reach of all children.

Infection Control:

The service was cleaned appropriately with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the building.

There were hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels and lidded bins available at all children and adult toilets and sinks. The children were observed to wash their hands in all rooms prior to mealtimes, after messy play and after using the toilet. The children were assisted with hand washing by the staff when required.

When nappy changing disposable aprons and gloves were worn by staff. All change mats were disinfected after each use and all nappies were safely disposed of.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises indoors and outdoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door and at the gate to the outdoor play area ensured all who entered the premises were checked in by an authorised person.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.

(d) All areas inside and outside were well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas. The premises was rodent proofed and a pest control company was contracted to check the facility on a regular basis.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets, nappy changing areas and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults present each day. A disability access toilet was available if required.