

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK076
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Name of Service:	Galbally Childcare Services Ltd
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Address of Service:	Galbally National School, Galbally, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	E34XN57
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Name of Registered Provider:	Martin Kearney
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Service type:	Part Time and sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29 th of January 2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	3
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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

Galbally Pre-school is a community service operating from a designated modular unit on the premises of Galbally National School. It offers a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00pm and a part time service from 12.00pm to 2pm, Monday to Friday.

It also provides a school aged service to the children attending the National school.

Staffing

The registered provider is the school principal of the Galbally National School. There is a designated person in charge who is responsible for running the pre-school service. There are 2 additional staff employed at the service. All staff have the required childcare qualifications.

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) (4)

Regulation 11(1)(2)

Regulation 19(1a)

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Regulation 23

Regulation 25

Regulation 29

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 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,*

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(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) A designated person in charge of operating the service 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 designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy was always available on the premises.

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

The files of the 3 staff members were reviewed on the last inspection dated 13th of December 2024. On the day of inspection only the Garda files for each staff member and the registered provider were viewed.

(2)(a) Two written references were available for each adult working at the service. All references were validated.

(b) All references were from each person's previous employers or from a previous school or college.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the 3 staff members working in the preschool service and the registered provider. Garda vetting for 3 persons 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 Jan 01/01/2024. Garda vetting for 1 person was not dated within the last three years. Please refer to Regulation 23 Safety for additional information.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no persons had lived in another country for longer than six consecutive months.

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

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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 manager of the service ensures that the correct number of qualified staff was rostered to work at the service. On the day of the inspection there were 3 staff members present with 15 preschool children for the morning session.
- (2) There were 3 preschool children present for the part time service with 2 staff members present. The adult/child ratio was correct throughout the morning sessional and parttime 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

The service ensured that each child's learning and development were facilitated within the daily life of the service. A healthy eating policy was in place, and children brought a healthy snack each day with them to the pre-school. Children's foods and perishable drinks were stored in the fridge in the pre-school room and were accessible to the children when needed.

All children were toilet trained and had unrestricted access to the toilets. The children were observed to flush the toilet themselves and wash their hands. Supervision was primarily by sight but the staff were within earshot available to support and help as needed. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were accessible in the bathrooms to ensure hygienic washing of hands.

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A couch with soft cushions and floor mats adjacent to the library was positioned in the quieter area of the room. This provided the children with a rest space if they needed quiet time away from the general play area. Children had daily access to the outdoor space containing lots of sensory and natural play materials. A big emphasis was placed on outdoor play and extending the children's learning outcomes in this area. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and gentle way when they expressed their emotions. The emotional and social wellbeing for all the children was fostered. This was done through an activity where each child was encouraged to express and name their feelings on being sad and happy.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for 3 staff members and the registered provider. However, the garda vetting disclosure for 1 person was not 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 Jan 01/01/2024.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The Garda vetting disclosure information was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate office. The service will ensure that all staff and the registered providers garda vetting is within the required time frame of renewal.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 23 safety.

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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) The manager at the service had completed first aid responder training and the certificate expiry was dated August 2026.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required for the children attending the preschool service.

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 appeared safe and secure. The main entrance door was closed and there was a system in place to ensure no children could exit the premises unaccompanied and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. The outdoor area was secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

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(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. The heating system was in operation due to the time of the year, and room temperatures were within the normal limits. Openable windows were in place to ensure a means of air circulation.

(d) The outdoor area play areas were routinely checked and cleaned, areas powered hosed as required and equipment maintained in good working order. The daily and weekly cleaning schedules were in place for the internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available for the preschool children attending the service and for the adults working in the service. Paper waste was managed appropriately in pedal operated bins. Paper towels were available to dry hands. The service has ordered three paper towel dispensers for the bathroom facilities.