

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK133
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Name of Service:	Next Step Playschool
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Address of Service:	Manister National School, Manister, Croom, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V35 EK54
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Brock
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office Estuary House Henry Street, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Next Step Playschool is a sessional pre-school service located in a classroom on the grounds of Manister Primary School in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday from 9.00 am to 12.00 md. It has a maximum capacity to accommodate 20 children. There were 11 children present on the day of the inspection. The premises has 1 large playroom with sanitary facilities adjacent. Outdoor play facilities are available in the school playground.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and manager of the service. A second adult is employed to work at the facility. Both adults at the service holds a recognised qualification 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, 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*

(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, (4) 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) On the day of the inspection the registered provider was the designated person in charge. A person to deputise in her absence was available.
- (b) The manager of the service was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a) There were 2 written references from past employers available in respect of both staff working at the preschool.
- (b) All references were from either past employers or from an alternative reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for both staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable to this service as neither staff member had lived outside the jurisdiction.
- (4) Both staff hold an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The service operates a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00pm. There were 2 adults present with 11 preschool children. The adult child ratio was correct.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that at all times the correct adult child ratios were adhered to at the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) The enrolment forms for the children registered to attend the service were reviewed. The service had a record in writing containing the following particulars for each of the children.

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date on which the child first attended the service was recorded.
- (c) Provision to record the date on which the child ceased to attend the service was available on all forms.
- (d) The name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for the collection of the child.
- (f) Details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.

- (h) record of immunisations received by the child.
- (i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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 registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and each staff working at the facility.
 - (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
 - (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.

- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.
- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10. A record of this was also provided to parents in the parent handbook.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child 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

There was a healthy eating policy in the service. Parents were encouraged to provide nutritious snacks such as fruit, sandwiches, crackers, cheese, and yogurts in their children's lunch boxes each day. Children had easy access at all times to their individual drinks. A fridge was available in the service for the safe storage of perishable foods if required.

The preschool room had sanitary facilities located next to the classroom allowing staff to supervise children from a safe distance when using the bathrooms. Handwashing was supervised with hot water, soap, and paper towels provided at a sink in the preschool room. Children were supported in managing personal care tasks such as dressing for home time, with belongings stored on labelled hooks featuring their photo and name. Lots of education material were exhibited on all walls of the room. Daily outdoor play was ensured regardless of weather, with raingear and wellington boots available.

Parents received verbal updates at pick-up time about their child's activities and engagement throughout the session

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operates from a large preschool room with adjacent bathroom access. The central area had child-sized tables and chairs for meals and activities, while low open shelves stored varied play equipment. Spaces included a

home corner for imaginative play, abundant art materials, and displays of children's artwork. Sand and water trays enabled sensorial play. Materials and equipment were rotated to match children's interests and abilities. Outdoors, children engaged in physical play activities to promote their gross motor development. Here children learned safe risk-taking while using a garden area and a large school yard for exercise and games.

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 external entrance door was locked and safely secured.
- Safe storage well out of children's reach was available for the cleaning agents and cleaning equipment used in the service.
- The person in charge ensured that complete and accurate daily records of attendance were kept for all children and adults present in the service.
- Fire doors leading from the preschool were clear and unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- A cleaning programme was available to ensure a high standard of hygiene was maintained in all areas of the preschool.
- Correct handwashing techniques using a cleaning agent was practised.

Administration of Medication:

- A policy was in place at the service to ensure safety with the administration of all medicines at the preschool. Staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the policy.

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 registered provider ensured that a person with first aid responder training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the preschool.
- (2)(a) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box for children was safely stored in an easy accessible position in the preschool room.
- (b) The first aid box was available to children at all times.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 20th of October 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment was available on the premises with the most recent service having been completed on the 16th of May 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) A certificate to demonstrate the record of the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarm system available on the premises was unavailable.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection of the service a maintenance check of the fire alarm system in the Preschool took place in November. Future maintenance checks of the system were booked and organised to take place twice yearly.

Supporting documentation submitted

Details of the action taken by the service in response to the noncompliance was forwarded to the Office of the Early Years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 20 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2025 and is due to expired on the 27th of March 2026.

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 secured. The front door to the school was locked and all who entered the building were checked in by a member of staff. Children were supervised at all times while playing outside.

(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.

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(d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available at the service.