

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015MO069 |
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| Name of Service: | Little Angels Playschool |
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| Address of Service: | Bofeenaun Community Centre, Bofeenaun, Ballina, Co. Mayo |
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| Eircode: | F26 D5W4 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Hazel Cawley |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 29/09/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 11 | PM | - |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | M Farrell |
| Inspection undertaken by: | Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo. |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Little Angels Playschool is a community-based sessional service located in a rural setting in Bofeenau in County Mayo. The service is registered to provide services to children aged between two and six years of age. Morning sessions are provided between 09:15 and 12:15hrs. The premises are in a designated section of a community building. The service has one playroom, sanitary facilities and there is an enclosed, well-developed outdoor play area located behind the building.

Staffing

There are three staff working in the service including one adult employed under an employment scheme. The registered provider is not involved in the day-to-day operation of the 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. 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

(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

(2) It was confirmed with the person in charge following review of documents and discussion with staff that there were three adults in the service at the time of the inspection. The following documentation was available for the three adults:

- (a) Two written validated references from past employers in particular the most recent employers for the three adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting had been obtained for adults where needed.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available on file for the two adults who worked directly with the children.

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) During the inspection an adequate number of adults were observed to work directly with the children in the service. On the inspector's announced arrival to the service there were 2 adults working directly with 11 children.
- (3) The minimum ratio for sessional services providing care to children over 2 ½ years of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 2 adults working directly with a maximum of 11 children during the inspection. A third adult employed through a community employment scheme was also present during the inspection.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The following information was made available for inspection:

- (a) Information on the service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to in the statement of purpose and function.
- (b) The adult:child ratios provided in the service.
- (c) The service's type of care/programme.
- (d) The facilities available in the service.
- (e) The service's hours of opening and fees.

- (f) The service’s policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 were available on file in policy folders. The policies had last been updated on the 12 September 2025.
 - (g) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded in an attendance book.
 - (h) Details of the staff daily rostered working hours.
 - (i) The service had a medication record book to keep written records of medication administered to children while in the service in line with the service’s medication administration policy.
 - (j) Written details of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children attending the service in an accident/incident record book.
- (3)
- The records were made available to the inspector by the designated person in charge when requested to.

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*

Compliance Information

The inspection took place early in the new preschool year and the staff were working in partnership with parents to support children settling into the service. There was a daily routine displayed in the playroom that was followed by staff but was also flexible. For example, the weather was dry early in the inspection so the staff and children altered the routine to go outdoors earlier to plant flowers. The staff had created a birthday list displayed in the playroom containing photographs of the children and their birthdates to help develop links for the children with the service. Similarly, there was also a family photograph display where one child proudly showed the inspector their photograph with their family. There were well-developed links with the local community and families, and an upcoming celebration of the preschool’s anniversary was planned with invitation signs posted on the main entrance door.

The staff managed the children’s behaviour in a positive manner using positive role-modelling. The staff were respectful in their interactions with each other and listened to children allowing them to express their preferences and needs. Children were given warning of upcoming transitions between activities allowing them to prepare themselves from the movement from one activity to another. Two children were designated helpers for the day and the staff informed the inspector that this rotated allowing each child to have a turn as a helper. The two children used ‘five-minute hand signs’ to show the other children that a transition would take place in five

minutes for example from playtime to tidy up time and lunch. ‘Scrapbooks’ were kept by the staff for each individual child with written records and photographs of activities in the service that the children took part in. There was a wide selection of play equipment attractively laid out in defined interest areas both indoors and outdoors providing a range of play opportunities for the children. Toys and play equipment in the playroom were displayed at low levels allowing children to have choice of play activities. During the inspection, some children enjoyed playing dolls with the adults including feeding them with bottles and soothing them while others played with construction and transport toys. The staff engaged with the children when playing and used opportunities to include learning such a colour recognition in messy play with playdough. There was a large group activity during the session where the children selected and coloured paper clothes items and placed them on a template of a person. The children had fun playing on an obstacle course outdoors with low-level balancing equipment and staff members were observed to encourage and praise the children for their achievements during this activity. A rest area with soft seating was available for children to rest in beside the book area in the playroom and a child was observed to choose a book and sit in the area looking at it.

The staff were observed to prompt the children to wash and dry their hands at key moments such as after using the toilet and playing outdoors, and before eating. Children were encouraged to cough into their elbows and there were stations with tissues provided at low levels for children use to clean their noses when needed. The children were encouraged and supported by the staff to use the toilet by themselves when they felt that they needed to. The staff used opportunities to promote children to be independent for example prompting and encouraging them how to put on and take off their own coats when playing outdoors.

The children’s food for lunchtime was provided from home in line with the service’s healthy eating policy and contained items such as fruit, vegetables, yoghurts, sandwiches and wraps. Snack time was a sociable event where the staff sat and ate with the children with discussions ongoing with the children.

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 main entrance to the service was via a community hall and the entrance door was found to be secured on the inspector’s arrival to the service. The inspector was admitted by staff following production of identification documents. A visitor book was available and used to record visitor attendance in the service. The high gate in the

enclosed outdoor area was secured at all times during the inspection with staff controlling access to the space. Cleaning products were stored in a secured cupboard in the service's hallway and were inaccessible to children. The two blind cords on windows in the playroom had restrictor devices in place to secure them. The toys and play equipment were well maintained, in good condition, and suitable for the ages and developmental stages of the children using them on the day. A kettle was stored out of reach of children on a high shelf and not observed to be used during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The children and staff used warm water and liquid soap to wash their hands and dried them with paper towel which was disposed of in foot pedal operated waste bins. The staff were observed to clean down surfaces such as tables after use. Cleaning records were completed by staff following cleaning and disinfecting processes and were observed to be up to date. Children's snacks provided from home containing perishable food items such as yoghurt were stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children required medication to be administered to them in the service. The staff were aware of correct processes for the administration of medication and the service had a policy in place in relation to medication administration.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit doors and routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

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

The children were supervised mainly by sight by the adults apart from when using the toilets where the children remained within earshot of the adults if they needed assistance. At lunchtime, the adults sat with the children and ate with them whilst supervising them. Before going outside, the children lined up and staff undertook headcounts which were repeated on return indoors to the playroom. The staff were observed to move around the outdoor play area, keeping children in their line of vision. Staff linked in with each other ensuring children were supervised at all times during the inspection.