

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LS076
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Learners Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	41 Rochfort Manor, Graiguecullen, Co. Laois
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R93 XK72
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Margaret Enright
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	41	PM	NA
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R Flynn
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<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

Little Learners preschool is a private sessional service for children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to operate between the hours of 08:45 and 12:00 and from 12:30 to 15:30 on a Monday to Friday basis. A morning sessional service was in operation for the current school year. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. An entrance hall with a reception area, three pre-school rooms, a sleep room, and a kitchen are provided. A large outdoor space is available at the back of the property which includes a portacabin used for an office. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available to the front of the property. The early years service is located in a housing estate in the town of Graiguecullen, County Laois.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs eight adults in the service. The registered provider and seven adults were working directly with the children on 16 June 2025. The registered provider facilitated the inspection.

### 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under -

Regulations 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment,  
Regulation 11 (1) (3) Staffing Levels,  
Regulation 19 (1) (a) Health, welfare and development of child,  
Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,  
Regulation 25 (1) (2) (a) (b) First aid,  
Regulation 26 (1) (a) (b), (4) Fire safety measures,  
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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*

*(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

(1)(a)

A designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Nine staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the eight staff members.

Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

- (c)  
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the registered provider and eight staff members. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)  
Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)  
The registered provider and eight staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3) The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection.  
There were forty-one children attending the service being supervised directly by seven adults and the registered provider.  
There were three adults providing direct care to twenty children aged from 3-5 years in the Butterfly room.  
There were two adults providing direct care to five children aged from 1-3 years in the Ladybird room.  
There were three adults providing direct care to sixteen children aged from 2-5 years in the Caterpillar room.

## 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

(1)(a)

The children were observed happy and content as they moved around their individual rooms engaged in various play activities. The play and learning materials were easily accessible on low level open shelving units in the pre-school rooms and shelving was kept to a minimum in the Ladybird room. Materials and equipment included paint, paper, crayons, art and craft materials, play dough, blocks, puzzles, jigsaws, books, cars and animals.

Children in the Butterfly room were practicing singing songs in preparation for their end of year graduation ceremony. The staff members demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. Staff used the children's first names in warm soft tones and gave positive praise throughout the preschool session. The children were observed participating for sports day in the fully enclosed outdoor play area. The staff called each child's name and presented them with medals on a stage. All the staff enthusiastically clapped and cheered for each child.

The children's snack was bought from home. Snacks were observed to be healthy and consisted of fruit, crackers, yogurts and water to drink. Children had access to their own bottles of water in the rooms. The children sat at tables and engaged in conversations with staff. Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands after toileting and staff assisted as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised when necessary. The children wore sun hats when outdoors for protection against the sun.

Staff from each preschool room communicated with parents via an electronic application that updated parents regarding their child's activities and learning. Parents and guardians collected their child from their preschool room or from the outdoor area. A verbal handover was provided to parents and guardians at collection time. The children's learning journals depicted each child's developmental progress and activities throughout the year and are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school year.

Areas of interest were noted in the pre-school rooms and included home areas, construction, arts and crafts, dress up and nature displays. Each preschool room had a variety of artwork and pictures displayed on the walls, for example a family wall, which helped the children feel connected to home. Helper charts, maps and colours were also displayed at child level.

Photographs of group activities were displayed in the hall for parents and children to view and keep updated with the learnings from the year. Photographs included a group activity of the children looking after eggs in an incubator and photographs of the process of waiting for the eggs to hatch. The service demonstrated a strong emphasis on diversity. The service had a 'our nationalities' flag wall representing children in the service. Staff advised that they held a 'foods from around the world' day and families shared a variety of traditional food from different countries.

The secure outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. The outdoor area was divided into sections per age group to allow the toddler group to be protected from children who were more mobile. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk for example, children were observed using an obstacle course. Staff provided appropriate supervision and held the children's hands while they climbed up and jumped off. There were opportunities for siblings to move between the separate areas in the garden to interact and spend time together during outdoor play. Children had planted potatoes in the vegetable garden. Staff advised that they cut the potatoes and made chips from the potatoes with the children. Children had plenty of opportunities to move, to practise and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance on the outdoor balance beam and climbing frames.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The pre-school rooms were equipped with low level child sized tables and chairs. The ladybird room was equipped with low level chairs, a cosy corner with thick vinyl mats and a low-level mirror on the wall.

Areas of interest included, home/kitchen corners, construction, dress up and rest areas with bookshelves. The Caterpillar room had a range of developmentally appropriate equipment such as a tuff tray, a large wooden connect 4 game and a variety of tabletop activities.

Each room had a range of books available in the reading area of each room.

suitable play and work equipment was available to children in all three preschool rooms in the service.

Suitable play equipment in the outdoor play area included a wooden climbing frame, ride on and push/pull equipment, balls with goals and a mud kitchen with props. A section of the outdoor area was covered over with a plastic corrugated roof to accommodate year-round outdoor play in all weather.

### 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 and one staff member were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in each pre-school room.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

## 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.*

*(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record for fire drills was available on the premises.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in November 2024. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced yearly with the last recorded smoke alarm service recorded in October 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in a conspicuous location in the premises.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

Monthly fire drills were not carried out in the service as the last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 08 April 2025.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A fire drill was conducted in the service on 17 June 2025.

Staff have been reminded to ensure fire drills are conducted monthly.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Record of fire drill.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 26 has been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for a total of 46 children and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.