

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH023
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Name of Service:	Butterflies Playschool
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Address of Service:	5 High Meadows, Station Road, Duleek, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 EF68
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Name of Registered Provider:	Paula McGee
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	04/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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

Butterflies Playschool provides a sessional service to children from 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). The service operates from 09:30am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday and caters for 10 pre-school children at any one time. The service is located to the rear of the registered provider's home and consists of 1 care room with sanitary facilities. A partially sheltered and an open outdoor space is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the sole operator 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/ 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 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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in the event of an emergency.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) The registered providers file was reviewed, and the following was noted.

- (a) & (b) Two written references were available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the registered provider. 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 not required as the registered provider had not resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The registered provider had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(c) Vetting procedures had not been completed for the person who provides cover in the event of emergency; two validated references and Garda Vetting were not available for inspection. The registered provider stated that this person had not been required to attend the service to date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Vetting now in place for the emergency contact person. The registered provider will ensure the garda vetting is renewed before the expiry period.

Supporting documentation submitted

Garda vetting and references received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the noncompliance in Regulation 9.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to

provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct; one adult cared for 7 children attending a sessional service (aged between 3 years to 5 years).

(8)(c) The registered provider has a named person to deputise in the event of an emergency.

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 Care Needs of the Children:

A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents. The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings. Snack time was a very social event with animated conversations and discussions. Children had their lunch in the outdoor covered area. the registered provider encouraged children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.

Supporting Relationships Around the Children:

Interactions observed during the inspection were consistently positive and caring. The registered provider and enabled children to engage in their preferred play activities and worked alongside offering encouragements, support and praise. Conversations with the children were delivered using warm vocal tones, welcoming facial

expressions and a listening and reflective approach. Children in turn showed confidence and responded positively to the guidance and directions given to them. Children were helped to develop good social skills in their engagement with each other. They learned how to behave within a group, how to take turns, to listen, wait, to share and to be mindful of those around them. The guideline rules that children were asked to adhere to were kept minimal and simple and the registered provider used clear language when reminding children about these. There was a predictable general routine within the session with transitions being announced in advance (e.g. tidy up time, tabletop activities, movement exercises). Children appeared to be settling in well to the service.

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 care room had defined and supported areas of interest which included library areas beside rest areas, wooden puzzles and building blocks, home area, and art and craft materials. The room was bright and airy. The outdoor area was available to the side of the building with grass area, hard surface and covered area available. The outdoor area equipment included a mud kitchen, sand pit, plastic playhouses, slide, tabletop activities, games, dolls and buggies.

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 entrance to the preschool was locked on the inspector’s arrival and opened by the registered provider to gain access.
- The outdoor area is adequately secured with a high fence.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, dispensed soap and single use cloth towels were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Handwashing was completed regularly throughout the day after outdoor play and before mealtimes in line with the service policy.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items such as used tissues. Lunches which were brought from home were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child was recorded on a daily basis.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

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 was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service. the last recorded fire drill was June 2025 prior to closing for the summer.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced 13th February 2025, and the smoke detection alarms were last serviced 26th September 2024.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service

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 valid insurance certificate for 11 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2026.