

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH077
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Name of Service:	Tigers Childcare
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Address of Service:	Castle Martin, Eastham Rd, Bettystown, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 DX70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Cline, Therese Noonan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	121	PM	74
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell and S. McKenna
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Tigers Childcare, based in Bettystown Co. Meath is one of several operated by two registered providers. The service is based in a two-storey building in a residential area. The service is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional care from 7.00am to 6.30pm. The service provides Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE). The children have access to seven care rooms with the Junior Discovery, Senior Discovery and Explorers rooms on the ground floor. The Active Cubs, Junior Active Cubs, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2 are based on the first floor. Each room has access to their own sanitary facilities, which includes nappy changing for the baby and toddler rooms. There is an outdoor area at the rear of the premises. There is a registered school age service in operation in the service.

Staffing

There are two registered providers involved in the service. The registered providers employ 35 staff members who work directly in the service or provide a support for staff members. There are three Quality support managers who provide assistance to staff members based in Tigers in Bettystown. There are four management staff on site, two are currently on extended leave. Twenty-two staff members are employed to work directly with the preschool children. Four staff members work with the school age children only and there is a chef and cleaner. Four students were being supported with work experience opportunities in 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

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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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 10 Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service, Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, and Regulation 32 Complaints.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 16 and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Junior Discovery, Senior Discovery, Explorers, Junior Active Cubs, ECCE 1 and ECCE 2 and did not include Active Cubs.

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.

Additional Information

This information was carried out on receipt of information received by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of one of the registered providers and a quality manager, who attended feedback online, and two of the quality managers, the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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,*
- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

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Compliance Information

- 1) (a) There was a designated person in charge of the service, and a there was a named person to deputise in their absence.
- (b) Following discussion with the person in charge, and review of the staff roster it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.
- (c) Recent changes in the service had led to some temporary management changes. On discussion with staff members, they were clear of who was the defined person and deputy person in charge to ensure lines of accountability.
- (2) The inspector reviewed the staff files of the 13 new staff members and 4 Students employed in the service since the last inspection in May 2025.
- (a)(b) Thirty-four written and validated references were available for the 13 staff members and 4 students.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available for all new staff members and the four students. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years following a review of staff members employed in the service at the last inspection.
- (d) International police vetting was not required for six staff members or the four students following a review of documentation available. The police vetting required for seven staff members was available alongside the certified translation where relevant.
- (4) A review of the eight new staff members qualifications, who are employed to work directly with the pre-school children in the service, demonstrated they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A relevant qualification was also available for the two Quality Managers. A qualification was not required for the staff members who worked solely with school age children or the four students.
- (7) There were records which demonstrated that new staff members had undergone an induction policy. New and previous staff members also discussed team meetings, regular training opportunities and supervision sessions. Documents available outlined these meetings and training sessions and were in line with the service's supervision policy.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The inspectors reviewed the service's 'Supporting Children's Social Behavioural Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing', 'Accident and Incident' and 'Complaints' policies. These policies contained information to support staff in safe and effective practices.

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.

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

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

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

(2) On the inspector's unannounced arrival, the adult child ratio was observed to be correct and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

- In Junior Discovery there were 2 staff members and 8 children, aged between 1 year 3 months and 1 year 9 months old, attending on part time or full day care basis.
- In Senior Discovery there were 4 staff members and 19 children, aged between 1 year 9 months and 2 year 9 months old, 17 of whom were attending on part time or full day care basis.

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- In Explorers there were 3 staff members and 18 children aged between 3 year 2 months and 3 year 8 months old, 17 of whom were attending on part time or full day care basis.
- In Active Cubs there were 2 staff members and 20 children aged between 3 years 3 months and 5 years 1 month old, attending on a sessional basis. Following the conclusion of the session there were 3 adults and 16 children attending on a part time or full day care basis.
- In Junior Active Cubs there were 2 staff members and 20 children aged between 3 years 4 months and 4 years 5 months old, attending on a sessional basis. Following the conclusion of the session there were 3 adults and 16 children attending on a part time or full day care basis.
- In ECCE 1 there were 3 staff members and 21 children, aged between 3 years 3 months to 4 years 8 months old, attending the morning session.
- In ECCE 2 there were 4 staff members and 15 children, aged between 4 years 1 months to 4 years 10 months old, attending the morning session.

(8) A review of the staff roster and sign in sheets demonstrated that two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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:

(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 in respect of details of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service. A total sample of 52 incidents were reviewed from 28 July 2025 to 23 March 2026 and included children in attendance across all care rooms. The records included details of the incident and risk assessments and dates and signatures from staff and parents.

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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
 - (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-
 - (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.
 - (3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

Supporting relationships

The inspectors observed staff members interacting with children in a kind and respectful manner. In rooms where there were children with additional supports required, various staff members were able to detail the supports that were in place. The inspector observed staff implementing these supports, for example, in one instance, a child was playing with a peer. The staff member did not intervene until they observed that the child had disengaged with the activity and gently redirected and focused them to an alternative activity. Staff members spoke of daily communication with parents and guardians at drop-off and collection. The inspectors observed positive interactions at collection time between staff and parents. Children were observed moving freely between activities with sensory activities readily available. Children were provided with opportunities to take care of and participate in the daily routines of the service. For example, children gave out the lunches to their peers, and a couple of children removed toys from the water play tray into a container so the water could be removed. The children were observed to enjoy helping in these activities.

Physical and material environment

Each room had suitable play facilities for the children in attendance. In the Junior Discovery room there were soft play facilities to support the children's gross motor development. A large sofa in the care room provided an area where staff could relax and comfort the younger babies and toddlers. In the older rooms, the children had access

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to larger play equipment, which was suited to their age and stage of development. Each room had low-level bookshelves containing a range of books which were accessible to the children, alongside a cosy area with a mat and cushions. In the ECCE room, it was noted that the shelves were labelled with a picture of the item stored on the shelf. The children used these pictures when tidying up.

(3) The service had a 'Supporting Children's Social Behavioural Emotional Regulation and Wellbeing', which detailed procedures and practices in place to support staff members in working with children. The policy included positive supports and detailed prohibitive practices. Staff spoken were aware of the procedures and prohibited practices as outlined in the policy.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The registered provider did not ensure that documented support plans were reviewed in conjunction with parents and that the review was documented. The inspector reviewed several detailed support plans, which were discreetly available in the rooms for staff. The support plans detailed the goals for different children and strategies described in the plans were reflective of those used by staff with children who were present on the day of inspection. However, each plan had a set of review dates, some from November and December 2025 and February 2026. These had not been completed to document that the reviews had taken place and that parents had been consulted to ensure children were provided with the most effective support.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

1. The registered provider stated that all children's support plans were reviewed following the inspection to ensure that the review dates were updated and reviews completed within the timeframe set. The overdue reviews from November, December 2025 and Feb 2026 were completed retrospectively. Parents were consulted as part of the review. As a preventive action they have introduced a support plan response log to ensure all evidence of parental involvement is noted, and any updated support strategies are recorded.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated support plans and log

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Summary Comment

The actions and evidence, submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

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 service had a secure entrance to the service with a buzzer system in place. This prevented any unauthorised access to the service and exit from the service by children.
- The water in the rooms sampled did not exceed 43°C. This demonstrated that the preventive action in place from the previous inspection had been maintained. Staff members also spoke of the checks they completed on the water temperature and what actions they may take should the water become too hot.
- Care room temperatures were below 22°C. Staff members were able to describe actions that they took should rooms become warm and there was documentation available to confirm regular checks and actions, if required, were taken.
- The blind cords that were in the rooms were secured.
- Play materials and equipment were presented in good condition.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of children's reach.
- Floors and ground surfacing throughout the building and in the large outdoor area were presented in good condition, with no trip hazards observed.

Infection Control:

- Children's soothers were stored in individually stored containers, and staff were aware of cleaning procedures.
- Individual bedding was available for each child and staff discussed the cleaning procedure used for the shared cots.

Safe Sleep:

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- Children under 2 years old were provided with a cot. Children aged over 2 years slept on stackable beds in an area set up within the care rooms in Senior Discovery and Explorers rooms after dinner.
- A thermometer was available in the care rooms to monitor the temperature whilst children slept. Staff were aware of procedures required should the temperature exceed 22°C whilst children slept. The inspector spoke with a staff member regarding sleep in the Junior Active Room as there were no children who currently sleeping in the room. The staff member spoke of the preventive actions following the last inspection which included air conditioning units in place when required.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A cord from a telephone was hanging down at a low level in the Explorers' room which posed a risk of injury to a child. It is acknowledged that when brought to the attention of staff, it was moved out of the children's reach.

Infection Control:

2. Hand washing practices were observed during the inspection and it was noted that there were occasions where they were insufficient to reduce the risk of cross contamination. These are outlined as follows
 - Four of the children in the Junior Discovery room were observed to move directly from playing outdoors, and in the care room to the table to have their dinner without washing their hands. It is acknowledged that the four children who had their nappy changed after outdoor play had their hands washed by staff before they had their food, however, those that did not have their nappy changed did not have their hands washed before eating.
 - No handwashing was observed before children were served their afternoon snack in the Junior Discovery room.
 - The children in the Senior Discovery room were observed to move directly from playing or sleeping to having their afternoon snack. No handwashing was observed before children were served their food.
 - During nappy changing in the Senior Discovery room, a staff member dampened a paper towel to clean the child's hands after they had their nappy changed.

Safe Sleep:

3. Sleep room checks were being carried out by staff at 10-minute intervals as required however they were unable to record details of the checks in the electronic devices due to the number of children in the care room, the number of staff needing to use the devices which delayed the recording of sleep information.

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Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The telephone cord was immediately repositioned and secured out of children's reach on the day of inspection and then replaced. Following the inspection, educators conducted an immediate review of all rooms within the service to identify and remove or secure any similar hazards that could pose a risk of injury to children. Educators have been reminded of their responsibility to identify and address potential hazards immediately and to record them on our daily safety checks. Educators will also inform management of any risks observed

Infection Control:

2. Handwashing practices were reviewed with all educators to ensure children wash their hands appropriately before all meals and snacks, after outdoor play and after toileting/nappy changing. Management shared the infection control policy with educators, and the team signed off agreeing they have read and reviewed the policy. We have also introduced a "When to wash my hands poster" in our Junior Discovery room. The nappy changing procedure was reviewed with educator on the day of inspection. Educators were reminded that children's hands must be washed with soap and water following every nappy change in line with infection prevention and control procedures. Management will complete regular observations and spot checks within care rooms to ensure procedures are followed consistently. Infection prevention and control procedures will continue to be discussed during staff meetings and supervision sessions

Safe Sleep

3. We have requested a second tablet for the senior discovery room in the meantime the service now uses both a tablet and the centre mobile phone to record sleep checks, which has improved staff access to electronic devices and reduced delays in documentation. Management will carry out regular audits of sleep records to ensure checks are completed and documented accurately at the required intervals.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of poster, daily check list, email to staff and sign off

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence, submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan, have addressed the non-compliances identified and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)(b)(c) The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint. The policy detailed how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with, recorded and as to how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure and specified timelines for responses.
- (2)(a)(b). The person in charge and Quality Manager spoke to the inspector regarding a recent complaint. There was a record in writing of this complaint and the service's response. The staff members spoke of how various policies, aside from the complaint policy were used, dependent on the type of issues needing to be investigated. The actions taken were reflective of the complaint and other policies shown to the inspector which included supervision and supporting behaviour. A record of the investigations was available for the inspector to review and was reflective of the details as outlined by the staff members.
- (3)(a)(b) The complaint available for review included details of the complaint and the various responses to the complainant.