

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH103
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Name of Service:	Duleek Community Childcare
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Address of Service:	Main Street, Abbeyland, Navan Road, Duleek, Co. Meath
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Daly
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	06/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath C15 CP23
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).

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Description of service

The service provides a sessional and part time care to pre-school children aged from 2 years to 6 years and operates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) from the Preschool Room from 09.00am to 12.00 midday and an afternoon session from 12.30pm to 15.30pm. The registered provider provides a choice of part-time hours so that the pre-school children can attend a maximum of 5 hours between 09.00am and 14.00hrs. The pre-school is situated in the village of Duleek in a commercial premises which was converted to a childcare facility. The service comprises of 2 pre-school rooms namely Preschool Room and Afterschool Room. The Preschool Room has access to sanitary accommodation in the hall, and the Afterschool Room sanitary accommodation is located within the room. An office, kitchenette (located off the Afterschool room) and disability access toilets are also available. Parking is available to front of the building, and an outdoor area is available to the back of the building which can be directly accessed from the Preschool Room.

Staffing

There are seven staff members employed in the service which includes two staff members who provides AIM support, and three staff member provides who provide care to school aged children only.

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/ 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 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*

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

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

The manager confirmed that there is one new staff member since the previous inspection. The remainder of the staff files were reviewed at a previous inspection and compliance achieved.

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(2) (a)&(b) This file was reviewed written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for the staff member which were obtained within the required 3 years' timeframe. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff members.

(d) Police vetting was not required as this staff member had not resided outside the state for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) The staff member had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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. Four staff members cared for 15 preschool children.

(2) The adult/child ratio was correct.

Four adults (two staff providing AIM support) cared for 15 children aged between 3 years and 5 years. Seven children attending a part time service and eight children attending a sessional service.

(8) The registered provider ensured that two adults are present at all times.

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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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Basic needs:

- Observed mealtime practices were relaxed and social; the children chatted freely, while the adults sat alongside them and joined in the various conversations.
- Drinking water was accessible to the children both during and outside of the designated mealtimes. The children's own reusable water bottles were stored on low-level shelves and could be easily retrieved, as needed.
- The adults supported the children to use the toilet facilities independently and offered prompts and reminders in relation to handwashing practice. Children in nappies were also attended to.
- Over the course of the day, the children had opportunities to experience a variation of adult-led and child-initiated activities. For example, staff members facilitated story time and painting activities and during free play, the children were observed to engage in imaginary play and tabletop activities in the outdoor area.
- Children were afforded the opportunity to play outdoors and return inside to play, if desired. Children were observed taking toys from the preschool room to the outdoor area to further extend their play.
- Children who wished to rest had access to a suitable rest area in the care room.
- It was observed that the care room had adequate space to accommodate the free movement of children, as they engaged in play and exploration.

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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 well defined and supported areas of interest which included library areas beside rest areas, wooden puzzles and building blocks, art and craft materials and montessori equipment. The room was bright and airy, and children had room to work on the tables or the floor if they wished. Children's artwork was displayed on the walls in a way that respects and acknowledges all the children's efforts.

The outdoor area was available to the back of the building with a low impact surface. Equipment available in the outdoor area included ride on toys, trucks, diggers and a sand tray. Children take toys of interest from the preschool room to the outdoor area on regular intervals.

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:

- A doorbell was in place on the main entrance door for parents and visitors, in order to reduce the likelihood of unauthorised access.
- Outdoors, the play area was enclosed by a combination of walls, fences and a secured gate.
- All of the examined play materials appeared safe and in good working order.
- Cleaning agents were stored at a height that was inaccessible by children. Bottles of sunscreen were also maintained out of the children's reach.
- There were no trailing cables or flexes accessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing and drying facilities were available in the sanitary facility, including warm water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and a lidded, pedal-operated bin. The children were observed to wash their hands before eating and were reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet.

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- Completed cleaning records were also visible within the room.
- There was individual storage in place for the children's personal belongings; wall hooks were provided for their coats, and their bags were maintained in cubby shelving.

Administration of Medication:

- The administration of medication was not observed. Furthermore, the inspector was advised that none of the children were in receipt of medication. A robust procedure for the administration of medication was described by a staff member when medication administration was discussed.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were noted to sleep during the period 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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

(3) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained.

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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 persons had up to date First Aid Responders course and were 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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out on the 14th April 2026.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises serviced in August 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises

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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 33 preschool children with an expiry date of 27 March 2027.