

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN005
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Name of Service:	Bizzy Bees
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Address of Service:	Carrickasedge, Carrickmacross, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A81 H226
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Farrelly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	56	PM	42
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna
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

Bizzy Bees is a privately owned service which commenced in 2008. It provides full-day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 – 6 years. The service caters for a maximum of 64 children and participates in the ECCE scheme Monday to Friday from 9.10am – 12.10pm. The service is located in a rural area outside Carrickmacross in Co. Monaghan. There are 3 care rooms, sanitary accommodation, a nappy changing area, a kitchen and an office. There is a large outdoor play area located to the side of the service.

Staffing

Seventeen staff, including the registered provider, are employed to work in the service. Fifteen staff, including the registered provider, work directly with the preschool children, and an admin person works in the office, and a cleaner attends the service in the evenings.

Two students on work placement from college were present on the day in the Senior and Junior Preschool rooms.

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 Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 20 Facilities for

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rest and play, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance and Regulation 25 First Aid.

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
- (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.

(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, who is the registered provider, and a named person to deputise in their absence, who is the service manager.

(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 was on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through staff information on display, review of the staff roster and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 17 staff and 2 students were reviewed.

(a) (b) A total of 38 references was available on file as required.

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(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 17 staff and 2 students. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff and students.

(d) A review of the employment history for 17 staff and 2 students demonstrated that 3 adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the 3 staff members was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the fifteen staff employed to work with children held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification is not required for the office-based admin person and the after-hours cleaner, as they do not work 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.

(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) The adult-to-child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult-to-child ratios were observed:

Morning:

Four adults cared for 17 children aged 1 year 3 months to 3 years 1 month in the Baby & Toddler room.

Three adults cared for 18 children aged 4 years to 5 years 3 months in the Senior Preschool room.

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Four adults cared for 21 children aged 3 years 11 months to 4 years 2 months in the Junior Preschool room.

Afternoon:

Four adults cared for 15 children in the Baby & Toddler room.

Three adults cared for 14 children in the Senior Preschool room.

Three adults cared for 13 children in the Junior Preschool room.

In addition to the above, the service manager heated children's meals at dinnertime and covered in care rooms when needed. The registered provider worked in the office and covered lunches in the Baby & Toddler room.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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
- (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.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being were facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Snack and meal times were observed to be relaxed social events, where staff and students were observed to sit with children and engage in conversations about the children's interests and home life events. The children take in all their food items from home, for two snack times and one hot meal. The children's snacks contained a variety of fruit, yoghurts, vegetables, cheese, breads, meats, rice cakes and crackers. Hot meals from home included pasta and rice dishes with meat and vegetables, potatoes and soup, toasties, stew dinners and noodles. Younger Babies and Toddlers were supported at meal times where required. Drinks were available to the children at meal times and throughout their day.

The older children were observed to use the toilet independently. Younger children had their nappies changed in line with their individual care needs. Children's appearances were cared for through self-care stations in each care room, to include tissues, mirrors and bins to encourage cleaning of noses and faces. The children in all care rooms

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experienced a change of environment to the outdoor areas on the day of inspection and were dressed appropriately for the weather. Established individual care plans, were familiar to staff.

The individual sleep needs of babies and younger children were met, and this was observed on the day as children were placed to sleep in line with their daily routine in the sleep room located off the Baby and Toddler room. Older children who required a sleep had access to stackable floor beds for sleep time if needed. Rest areas to include sofas and child-sized seats, wooden teepees with cushions and blankets provided cosy areas in the care rooms, which allowed space for the children to take time to rest and relax during their day.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere in the care rooms was warm and engaging. Upon the inspector's arrival to the care rooms, the children were observed actively playing within their care rooms or preparing for morning snack time. The children appeared familiar with those who cared for them, and older children were observed to call for staff or students for help when needed, for example, when they needed more paper for colouring or when they wanted to share toys with the other outdoor areas.

The staff were observed to communicate using gentle and positive tones while interacting with the children. The staff used gentle encouragement for children to be mindful of other children's feelings, such as taking turns with certain toys, or waiting their turn to use play equipment such as the swings. The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes and also considering the children's individual preferences and choices. The staff and students treated each child with respect, and appeared familiar with the child's home life, with conversations about family members and going on holidays observed.

Communication with parents is in person at arrival and collection times, was observed on the day, with the parents/carers informed on how the child had been that morning. "Stay and Play" days occur regularly, where parents and carers can spend time in the children's care rooms on designated days. Photos from those days were recorded in the children's journals. Parents/Carers are also invited into the service, and photos from these occasions on display demonstrated a grandparent reading stories to children and a parent playing musical instruments for children.

The staff and students were observed to work well together. Transition and waiting times for children within their care rooms were actively reduced, for example, when preparing for outdoors, as soon as the children in Senior Preschool were ready for outside, one staff member went on to the outdoors area with a group of children in line with the adult-child ratio.

Physical And Material Environment

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The care rooms were comfortable and included designated interest areas for children to play in. A comfortable adult-sized sofa was available in the Baby Toddler room to provide an area for staff to nurse and feed younger babies. The tables and chairs used for snack and meal times are tidied away outside of meal times in suitable storage areas within each care room.

The staff explained to the inspector that their care and learning approach had recently changed and is now “curiosity-led”, where the children’s learning experiences and planning are based on their emerging interests and curiosities observed by staff during the children’s play. The rooms were presented similarly, with many real-life materials and equipment in place, with minimal plastic toys present. The interest areas included dressing up tables with hair equipment, floor-level sand trays, rest areas to relax, water trays with play materials, playdough, curiosity boards to include a selection of handles and floor-level grass and road surfaces for cars and animal play. There were soil boxes with flowers, coloured rice trays, creative painting and colouring areas, dress up materials to include bags, hats and glasses and many mirrors on display in each of the care rooms. A selection of books, building blocks, construction areas with materials, table-top jigsaws and matching games was provided. The children had access to their learning journals and were observed to enjoy looking at their own journals and were seen to read about their friends' adventures, which were recently completed by their parents/carers when the books went home at Easter break. On display there were birthday charts, nationality displays, family photos, keyworker displays and photos, displays to include “wow moments” and “we noticed” post-its which recorded children’s emerging interests and curiosities.

Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low-level shelves and boxes at children’s level in each care room, which nurtured independence to retrieve and self-care to return. There was a display of children's recent artwork on the care room walls.

There is a large outdoor area to the side of the premises, divided into three areas with a mixture of soft impact surfacing, artificial grass and gravel. One area is accessed directly from the Baby Toddler room with small climbing frames with a swing, and a wooden house with a slide in this area. A wooden ship, a music wall and ride-on toys were also available for children’s use. The second area had many climbing structures and poles, a music wall, a seesaw and swings were also present, with the swings proving a popular choice of play for children. A raised wooden house and slide were also available in this area, alongside tyres and ride-on trucks. The third area was presented in a construction layout with real-life bricks and blocks, wooden planks, plastic tubing, tyres and gravel available for children to play and explore with. A covered section was provided in this area, which included a creative area, office role play section, a dressing table, armchairs, animals, dolls, blocks and wooden toys. Two recently constructed outdoor toilets are located in this area for children’s use while in the outdoor play areas.

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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 following safety measures were observed on the day of inspection:

The main entrance door was secured upon the inspector's arrival. The entrance door remained locked when not in use during the inspection, ensuring no unauthorised person could enter the building or no child could leave the building unsupervised. Ground surfacing, both indoors and outdoors, was maintained in a good state of repair with no trip hazards observed. Stairways were maintained in good condition and adequately lit. Storage areas were inaccessible to children. Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of children. Play materials, equipment and resources were observed to be maintained in good condition. The children were adequately supervised throughout the inspection process. The outdoor areas are surrounded by wooden fencing with gates secured where required to prevent a pre-school child from gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger. Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date. Windows on the first floor had restrictors in place. Blind cords where they were fitted were secured out of children's reach. Fire exits remained free from obstructions during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the following infection control measures in practice within the service:

Handwashing was observed to take place after the children used the toilet and before snack time.

Thermostatically controlled warm water, hand soap, bins, and paper towels were available at each wash hand basin. The care rooms were maintained between the required temperatures of 18°C - 22°C. Care rooms and sanitary areas are ventilated through means of openable windows. The service was notably well kept, with all care rooms and sanitary areas observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic manner. Cleaning schedules were in place and up to date. The staff advised the inspector that the children's bed linen is sent in weekly by the parents, and a spare set of bed sheets is required to be on site in case bed sheets are soiled after use. Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after meals. Snacks and dinners taken in from home are stored in the kitchen fridge. External waste bins were stored securely and were inaccessible to children.

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Safe Sleep:

Sleep facilities were provided for children. A sleep room located of the Baby & Toddler room had 5 cots for children aged under 2 years, and a number of stackable beds available for children aged 2 years and over.

Sleep records were maintained for the sleeping children, which were completed by a staff member at ten-minute intervals. Sleep checks detailed the children's position, skin colour and breathing pattern. The sleep room temperature was maintained between the required 18°C and 22°C for children aged 1 year and over.

During sleep times when children aged 2 years and over were sleeping on stackable beds a staff member was observed to remain in the sleep room with the children.

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) The registered provider used written records which detailed each child's arrival and departure time daily.
- (3) (a) The registered provider ensured that only preschool children, a person dropping off or collecting a preschool child, an employee, an unpaid worker, or a pre-approved visitor can enter the premises upon staff approval.
- (b) A visitor log book is maintained. The inspector was requested to sign in upon arrival.

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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 registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. The registered provider and one staff member held in-date FAR training, both of whom were rostered to work on the day of inspection.
- (2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises, one each on the ground and first floor, which were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.