

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY005
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Name of Service:	Little Wishes Pre-School and Afterschool Service
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Address of Service:	Ballyhearth, Clonfanlough, Athlone, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	N37 Y286
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lesley Keenaghan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes
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

The service operates on a part time basis Monday to Friday from 9.30 – 14.00. The service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme to children aged between 2– 6 years. Staggered ECCE sessions are in operation from 09:15 to 12:15 and 09:30 to 12:30.

The premises consists of a purpose-built single storey building with three pre-school rooms, namely Pre-school room 1 and 2 and an entrance lobby to the service. Pre-school 1 room is divided into three sections. There is an outdoor play area and a sheltered outdoor section on site.

Staffing

There are four adults employed in the service. The registered provider and a staff member were working directly with the children on the 18 September 2025.

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.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 15- Record of a Pre-school child

Regulation 16 -Record in relation to Pre-school service

Regulation 17 – Information for Parents

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)(b)

Regulation 20- Facilities for Rest and Play

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and out and record of attendance (1)(3)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 27- Supervision

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, staff member 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,*

(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 person in charge was available in the service. A deputy person was available if required.

(b)

The registered provider facilitated the inspection.

Four staff files were reviewed including the registered provider. The following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of the registered provider. Two written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members with the exception of the non compliances outlined below.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the four staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

A second validated written reference was not available in respect of one staff member.
Two written references in respect of a staff member were not validated by the registered provider.

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(9)(2)(a)(b)

In respect of second reference not available for a staff member the manager has received this reference and it has been validated. This reference has been forwarded to The Tusla inspector via email.

In respect of two written references not validated. These have now been validated by the manager.

In future prior to hiring and allowing staff to start work we will make sure that all references have been received and validated as per regulation 9.

(2)(d)

I have requested the staff member involved to apply for police clearance. The staff member has started the application process and has emailed me proof of this.

The manager will ask whether a potential staff member has worked overseas for a period of 6 months or more will be a priority when hiring staff in the future.

Supporting documentation submitted

References submitted.

Police vetting application form.

Summary Comment

(2)(a)

The non-compliance has been addressed.

(2)(d)

The non-compliance remains outstanding as the police vetting process has not been completed. The registered provider shall submit the police vetting clearance document to the Early Years Inspectorate upon receipt.

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were seventeen children attending the service supervised directly by the registered provider and staff members in the morning session.

There were five children attending on a part time basis supervised directly by two adults in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

Documentation reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)

In a review of a sample twelve child enrolment records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) was available in respect of children attending the service.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i).

(j)

Correct procedures were in place for the administration of medication in the service. One administration of medication form with signed parental consent was available and reviewed.

(k)

Five accident and incident records were reviewed. Each accident and incident record had details of the accident/incident and were signed by the children's parents or guardians.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

A parent handbook was available for review. The registered provider stated the parents receive the parent handbook at the start of the pre-school term.

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

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children from the pre-school rooms one and two were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play and gross motor activities as well as imaginative and sensory play outdoors. Transitions were smooth as a five-minute warning was used to notify the children of a change of activity in the pre-school rooms. Children were encouraged to be independent and enjoyed being selected as the little helper to give out the lunch to their peers and tidied their lunch boxes away after lunch supported by adults. Children choose what activity they wish to participate in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area, supervised by staff members. One to one group work was observed in pre-school room 1 as children worked with various Montessori equipment supported by the registered provider.

Adults were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff members used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities and

mealtimes. Good teamwork was observed amongst adults. Children have settled in well into the service at the start of the pre-school term. Children were assisted with their individual care needs in a positive caring manner by the adults.

The pre-school rooms were bright and colourful with children's artwork and posters displayed. A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest area for story time after snack in pre-school room 2.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. Parents were observed to collect their children from the pre-school rooms after the ECCE session. A verbal handover was provided to parents at this time. A parent notice board is displayed in the reception area of the service. Updates and information area shared with parents via a short messaging system (SMS). Each child has their own learning journal depicting their play and work activities. The registered provider stated the journal and mosaic for the children is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play, a nature table and home corners. Extra toys and equipment were noted in pre-school room 1 which were accessible to children.

(b)

Cosy couches were available for children to rest and relax in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

A large safe and secure outdoor play area surrounded by fencing was noted to the rear of the service. A tarmac and mulch surface was noted. Two sheltered play areas are available to children. Toys and equipment included wooden structure with a slide and swings, water funnels, sand play, a see saw, a shop, tractors, bikes and trikes.

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 main entrance to the service was secure. Entrance to the service is via wooden fencing with a gate to the side of the service. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were available for review. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature of the water recorded was 33.8 degrees Celsius.

Windows were open to ventilate the sanitary accommodation and pre-school rooms.

Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Hand washing for children was facilitated before snack time.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature. Correct procedures are in place for the administration of medication in the service.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

A visitor log for the service in respect of (a)(b) was available for review.

(4)

A record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year by the service.

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 deputy person in charge were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
A first aid box was available in an accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

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

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)
The first aid box was inadequately stocked as the following items were not available.

- There was no tough cut scissors.
- A burns dressing was not available.
- The expiry date noted on bandages was February 2015.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The manager has ordered a large first aid box from a childcare agency which is compliant with this regulation and covers up to 50 persons.

To ensure that our first aid box is adequate in the future we do a full check annually and replace stock as it is used throughout the year.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice for first aid box.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance has been addressed through the corrective and preventive actions taken.

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 the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 16 June 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in September 2024.

The firefighting equipment were serviced in March 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments by adults during the inspection.

Children were handed over to parents by adults after the ECCE session was finished.

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 the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.