

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY027
Name of Service:	Little Trinity
Address of Service:	The Bungalow, Puttaghaun, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
Eircode:	R35 ER83
Name of Registered Provider:	Eleanor Bagnall
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	06/05/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	N/A	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Flynn and C. O'Connor Hughes
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

Little Trinity is a privately operated preschool service in a residential area in the town of Tullamore and has been operating since 2008. The service caters for children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service opens Monday to Friday and provides morning and afternoon Early Childhood Care and Education sessions. Morning sessions are between 08:30- 11:45 on a staggered basis for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. The afternoon session is from 12:00-15:00 Monday to Friday.

A secure outdoor playground is provided at the back of the service. The service consists of two preschool rooms, the red room and the yellow room, a staff room and a kitchen. An entrance hall functions as a cloakroom and greeting point which opens directly from the main front entrance. Car parking and set down is to the front of the service along the public road.

Staffing

The registered provider employs four staff members. There were three adults present on the day of inspection, including the registered provider who works directly with the children. A student was present on work experience in the service. Staff working with children hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 8 on the National framework of qualifications. The registered provider was present and facilitated the inspection process.

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 carried out in the sessional service that operated from 12:00 - 15:00 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;

Regulations 9(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment,
Regulation 11 (1) (3) Staffing Levels,
Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (j) Record of pre-school child,
Regulation 16 (1) Record in relation to pre-school service,
Regulation 19 (1) (a) Health, welfare and development of child,
Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 (1) (2) First aid,
Regulation 26 (1) (4) Fire safety measures,
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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy 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)

A designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Clear management structures were displayed in the pre-school service.

Six staff files including the registered providers and a student on work experience were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the four staff members.

Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider and the student.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the registered provider, four staff members and the student on work experience. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

(3)

The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection.

There were sixteen children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults and the registered provider.

There were two adults providing direct care to nine children aged from three to five years in the Red room.
There were two adults providing direct care to seven children aged from four to six years in the Yellow room.

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)
A sample of 12 records were reviewed. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above regulation for all the records reviewed.

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)

The inspectors were informed that medication is not routinely given to children attending the service. Blank administration of medication forms were available in the event that a child requires medication to be administered.

(k)

Four 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 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)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children were engaged in tabletop activities with a variety of materials for creative and manipulative play. Children were observed to enjoy outdoor play supervised by the staff. Children were observed eating a packed lunch provided by their parents. The children sat at tables and engaged in conversations with staff. Lunches consisted of a variety of sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit, with water to drink.

The staff interacted with the children in a respectful manner. Staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Verbal strategies included clear instruction on what was going to happen next and using the children's names. Positive praise was given to children on the completion of activities. Smooth transitions were observed as children were given notice to the change of activity. Individual and small work group was observed as children learnt through play.

The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the afternoon as they chose their play and learning materials and used the various interest areas. Materials are organised and grouped on open storage units at the children's level to encourage children to use them independently.

The service maintained learning journals for each child which contained pictures of their play and work activities. These are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school year. A second workbook with the child's developmental observations were available for review and shared with parents. The staff advised the inspectors that information and updates regarding the service are given to parents at drop off and collection times, and via a monthly newsletter. A family wall was displayed in the preschool rooms with photographs of children with their families. A daily pictorial timetable was displayed at child level. Photographs of the weeks 'super star' helper and photos of each child ensured each child was supported and included among the group. A community wall was observed in the lobby of Tullamore town with photos of local areas of interest.

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

Both the yellow room and red room had a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available for the children to use and play with throughout the day. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment ensured the resources were easily accessible to the children at all times. Defined areas of interest were observed and included a home/kitchen corner with equipment, nature corner with a fish tank and an area with puzzles and jigsaws and arts and craft materials. Montessori materials that included sensorial, mathematics, language and practical life elements of the Montessori method.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service was secure with a bell entry system which was controlled by the staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. The Inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled warm water and liquid hand soap was available for hygienic hand washing. Staff were observed to encourage and prompt the children to wash their hands after before snack time.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not required to be administered to any child on the day of inspection. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.

Fire Safety:

The fire emergency exits were free from obstruction in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The outdoor gate at the side of the premises was observed to be open and unsecured allowing unauthorised access to the setting. Upon request of the inspector a corrective action was taken by the registered provider, and the gate was secured and locked.
2. A child was observed to have whole grapes in their lunch box that were not cut in half, this presented a choking hazard. Upon request of the inspector a corrective action was taken by the staff member, and the grapes were cut in half and returned to the child.
3. Visibility strips positioned at a child's eye level were not in place on the double patio doors leading to the outdoor area. There was a potential risk that a child could walk into glass doors and receive an injury.
4. There was no documentary evidence available that daily indoor and outdoor risk assessments were completed to promptly identify and manage any potential risks in the premises.

Infection Control

1. Foot pedal operated bins were not available for the hygienic disposal of waste materials. It is acknowledged that the registered provider submitted evidence that she purchased three new pedal bins to use in the service on the 08/05/2025.
2. Perishable items such as yoghurts and ham sandwiches contained within the children's lunchboxes were not refrigerated. It is acknowledged the registered provider sent photographic evidence of lunches stored in bags in the fridge on the 08/05/2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety

1. The outdoor gate is locked at all times. Prior to the children going outside, a risk assessment is conducted. Staff remain at the gate until all children are outside, the gate is then locked. Staff have received training on how to keep the gate locked.
2. Children's lunches are checked prior to consumption to ensure fruit has been halved and if not a staff member will chop the fruit.
3. Visibility stickers have been put on the double patio doors.
4. Daily Risk assessments are carried out both indoors and outdoors.

Infection Control:

5. Foot pedal bins have been placed in all rooms.
6. Perishable items are now stored in the fridge for all children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photograph of sign on gate reminding staff to lock gate.
2. Updated healthy eating policy includes advice about cutting fruits which may be a potential choking hazard down the middle.
3. Photographs of visibility stickers on the double patio doors.
4. Risk assessment template dated 4 June 2025.

Infection control:

1. Photograph of new bins.
2. Photograph of lunches stored in fridge.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken photographic and written evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, 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 was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises for the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the main entrance in the service.

(b)

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

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

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The firefighting equipment were serviced on the 11 December 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in a conspicuous location in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) It was noted that five fire drills had taken place in 2024 and the last fire drill carried out in the service was in January 2025. Monthly fire drills were not carried out in the service which would impede the safe evacuation of staff and children in the event of an emergency.

(b) An annual maintenance record was not available in respect of the smoke alarms. The smoke alarms were last serviced on the 12 December 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (a) A fire drill was conducted 3 June 2025 and a record was received by the inspectorate. Fire drills are now carried out at the beginning of every month. The service will ensure that a minimum of 10 monthly fire drills are carried out each year.

(b) Smoke alarms were checked and serviced on 8 May 2025. Annual service of all equipment will be planned each year.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the record of the fire drill dated 3 June 2025.

Record of the smoke alarm service dated 8 May 2025.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken written evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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 and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.