

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015OY049

**Name of Service:** Muddy Puddles

**Address of Service:** 45 Grand Canal Court, Daingean Road, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

**Eircode:** R35 TE26

**Name of Registered Provider:** Lorna Glennon

**Service type:** Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 08/01/2026

**No of pre-school children:** AM 19 PM 7

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R Flynn
<b>Title:</b>	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.

### Description of service

Muddy Puddles is a privately operated early years' service in a residential area in the town of Tullamore, Co Offaly. Muddy Puddles has been operating since 2022. The service offers full time, part time and sessional care for children aged from 2 years and 6 months, to 6 years. Currently, children enrolled range from 3-6 years. The morning sessions are between 09:00am – 12:00pm and full day care is 09:00am – 6:00pm Monday to Friday. A secure outdoor playground is provided at the back and side of the service. The service consists of two preschool rooms, the Butterfly room and the Bumblebee room, a quiet room/sleep room, an outdoor playroom, an office and a kitchen area. An entrance hall functions as a cloakroom and greeting point which opens directly into the Bumblebee room. Car parking and set down is facilitated in the designated car park to the front of the service.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs five staff members. There were five adults present on the day of inspection, including the registered provider. Staff working with children held a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to 8 on the National framework of qualifications. The registered provider works directly with the children when required and was present to facilitate the inspection on 08 January.

### 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 regulations

- Regulation 9 – Management and Recruitment (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4).
- Regulation 11– Staffing Levels (1)(3).
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(a).
- Regulation 20 – Facilities for Rest and Play (1) (a) (b), (3) (a).
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 – First Aid (1), (2)(a)(b).
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures (1) (a) (b), (4).
- 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 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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in place which identified the roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2)

Six staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

- (a)  
Eleven written validated references were available from a previous employer and
- (b)  
One written validated reference was available from a reputable source.
- (c)  
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for six staff. In regard to the six staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)  
Police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)  
Six employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 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.*
- (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)  
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. In the morning on arrival at the service, there were nineteen children being supervised directly by five adults. In the afternoon, there were seven children being supervised by five adults.
- (2)  
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection demonstrated by the following observation;  
In the morning, there were two staff providing direct care to eleven children aged between 3-6 years in the Bumblebee room.  
There were two staff providing direct care to eight children aged between 3-6 years in the Butterfly room.  
In the afternoon, there were four staff providing direct care to seven children in the service.
- (8)(a)  
There were at least two adults on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

## 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

Children brought snacks and lunch from home, and a hot meal was provided by the service to children who were enrolled on a part time or full-time basis. Lunches brought in from home were observed to be a variety of sandwiches, fresh fruit, yoghurt, cheese and pasta. Hot meals were heated by the staff at dinner time. Dinner on the day of inspection was pasta with tomato sauce. The staff sat at the tables with the children during meals engaging in conversation with the children promoted a relaxed atmosphere. Children's drink bottles were available in the preschool room throughout the day. Milk was available in the fridge.

Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands before meals, after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised and supported when necessary. Nappy changing facilities were available for any child not toilet trained.

The children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play throughout the day. The weather on the day of inspection was cold and wet. Children wore coats and hats when playing outside.

### **Supporting relationships**

The preschool rooms had children's artwork displayed, as well as 'gingerbread check in' which documented children's individual feelings and interests. The staff promoted an inclusive early years' experience, ensuring all children could be part of group activities facilitating all children's participation with support where required. Children were observed approaching staff for hugs and staff provided cuddles when children wished. Staff advised that communication with parents was via an electronic application that provides updates to parents regarding their child's activities, care and learning. Updates were also provided at drop off and collection times. Learning journals were also maintained for each child, documenting their individual learning and development over the course of the academic year.

### **Physical and material environment**

The Bumblebee and Butterfly rooms had low-level open shelving where materials and equipment were easily accessible to the children, enabling free choice. Play and learning equipment available to the children included musical instruments, dress up costumes, arts and crafts materials, trucks and cars, and a variety of jigsaws and puzzles.

Children in the Butterfly room were observed engaged in a messy play activity with slime in a tuff tray. Other children enjoyed building with blocks. Children in the Bumblebee room were observed to enjoy tabletop activities such as using modelling clay with rolling pins and shape cutters. Staff participated in activities with the children throughout the day.

### 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 and adequate play equipment and materials were provided in the service. Both preschool rooms were spacious for the children to move about and play during their time spent in the service. Suitable play equipment was provided which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities and sensory materials in each room.

(b)

A separate room was available for quiet time or for children to rest or sleep during the day. Two low level floor beds were available in the room. Additional low-level beds were available in the attic storage. Clean bed sheets and blankets were available. Suitable comfortable rest areas were available in the preschool rooms should a child wish to take a break from activities for some quiet time, rest or read a book. Child sized wooden benches with seat cushions were provided in the Butterfly and Bumblebee rooms.

(3)(a)

A fully enclosed outdoor playroom was located to the back of the service, accessed via the Bumblebee room. This area provided an additional play space during all seasons and inclement weather. Space was provided for the storage of coats and wellie boots. Heaters were installed up high above the door. Two vinyl couches were provided for rest when required.

Natural grass and decking were provided in the garden for running and playing. Shelter was provided to the side of the garden in the outdoor play area by a plastic corrugated roof covering part of the outdoor space. A high secure fence and gates surrounded the play area. Areas of interest included mud kitchens and a sand tray for messy play. A wooden playhouse with a slide and a basketball hoop were provided for gross motor play. Ride on equipment such as scooters and toy tractors were also available to the children.

### 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 preschool was secured and controlled by staff to prevent children exiting the premises unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access. A bell at the entrance door alerted staff to visitors and parents. 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 cupboards, out of reach of children. The kitchen area is in the Butterfly room and was inaccessible to children on the day of inspection.

##### Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. The children were supported to wash their hands before snack time and after using the bathroom. Paper hand towel dispensers were accessible to children for hand drying. Pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and preschool rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation as well as openable windows. The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

##### Administration of Medication:

Medication was not required to be administered to any child on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the fridge out of reach of the children. Staff were familiar with the procedure of administration of medication if required by a child.

##### Fire Safety:

The designated fire exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection. The fire assembly point was to the front of the service in the carpark.

### 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)

Five staff were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the operational hours of the service on 08 January 2026.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the office of 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.*

*(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*

*(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*

*(b) an employee, and*

*(c) an authorised person.*

*(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 fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 19 December 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment were serviced on 05 August 2025 and the smoke alarms were serviced 15 October 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were positioned at doorways throughout the service.

## 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 thirty children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.