

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015SO040
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Name of Service:	Lollipop Lane Creche, Montessori and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Springvale, Tubbercurry, Co. Sligo
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Eircode:	F91 D76V
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Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Kilbane
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	58	PM	35
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello, K Folan, N Toner.
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

Lollipop lane creche, montessori and afterschool is located on the outskirts of the town of Tubbercurry. It is a privately owned purpose-built childcare facility providing full, part time and sessional service. The service is registered for 86 preschool children in a full day care service. It also operates a service for school aged children. The facility has accommodation for five care rooms. On the day of inspection four care rooms were in operation

Staffing

Twenty-Two adults are employed in the service. The registered provider does not work daily in the service. Nine adults worked directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection. The person in charge and deputy manager are surplus to the adults providing direct care to the children in the service. Two adults work in the kitchen. Eight adults employed by the service were not present on the day due to various leaves.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26, 27 and 28 however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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.

Additional Information

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 10 February 2026 in relation to high water temperatures. An adequate response was received from the registered provider on 10 February 2026.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 named person in charge and a person available to deputise as required.

(1) (b)

Both the named persons in charge and deputy person in charge were on the premises when the inspectors arrived and remained on the premises throughout the period of the inspection. A review of the staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or deputy person in charge were rostered to be on the premises during the hours of operation.

(1) (c)

The person in charge confirmed that there was a clear line of authority within the service. Staff can report to their room leader or, directly to either of the person in charge. When discussed with the inspectors, staff demonstrated clear understanding of their role within the service and the reporting structure as described by the person in charge.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of all 22 adults employed and one student in the service were reviewed.

Forty written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of all 20 adults employed in the service.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 23 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(2) (d)

International police vetting was available for 11 adults who had resided outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.

(4)

Nineteen adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

One verified reference from a past employer or reference from another source was not available for one reference.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

(2) (a) (b)

The reference has been received and verified. We will ensure that all staff documentation is on file before any new staff member or student is to start in the service. We are completing a checklist list that will be a working document and changed added to for staff files. This is to be located at the front of the Staff Folder for reference.

Supporting documentation submitted

Verified reference submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have been reviewed and accepted.

This regulation is now complaint.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

There were nine adults working directly with 58 children on the inspectors' unannounced arrival to the service. A review of a sample of rosters records showed that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during service hours of operation.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of the unannounced inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- 'Olives Room': One adult cared for 9 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.
- 'Elms Room': One adult cared for 9 children aged 4 to 5 years of age.
- 'Blooms Room': One adult cared for 6 children aged 3 to 5 years of age.
- 'Blossoms Room': Four adults cared for 17 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.
- 'Willows Room': Three adults cared for 17 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

At approximately 13:15 in the afternoon the following ratios were observed:

- 'Olives Room': One adult cared for 7 children aged 3 to 4 years of age.
- 'Elms Room': Closed
- 'Blooms Room': Closed
- 'Blossoms Room': Four adults cared for 13 children aged from 3 to 5 years of age.

- ‘Willows Room’: Three adults cared for 15 children aged from 4 to 5 years of age.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that there was suitable and adequate furniture and play materials and resources available for the preschool children:

Elms Room:

This room supported children from 4 to 5 years of age. The room is visually appealing with the children’s artwork and educational posters adding colour to the walls of the room. Clearly defined interest areas were set up to give the children opportunities for imaginary; role play and creativity. Home corners were equipped with kitchens, dolls, baby changing tables and cots. A construction area was equipped with building blocks, cars trucks and road tracks. Low level accessible shelving was equipped with a variety of fine motor skill toys including magnets, suckers, tweezers and counting toys. Sensory play was supported with water and sand tables.

The elms room had sufficient tables and chairs that were age and height appropriate to support table top activities and meal times. A rest area with child size sofa and soft furnishings provided a comfortable area to rest or read a book.

Olives Room:

This room supported children from 3 to 5 years of age. The room is decorated to stimulate the imagination of the preschool children. A home corner is suitably equipped with child size kitchen, dining table, resources of wooden vegetables, food and crockery, creating an area for role play. A cosy area with child size couch and armchairs and extensive library creates a cosy area for language development. This was observed to be used by the children as they relaxed looking through books and participating in story time. An ample number of arts and crafts provided children with opportunities for creativity as evidenced by the recent valentines artwork displayed.

Three large tables and a 10 child size chairs provided a place to sit and complete tabletop activities.

Blooms Room:

This room supported children aged 3- 4 years of age and contained equipment and materials to cater to each area of the preschool child’s development. For imaginative play, the home corner area was stocked with a play kitchen,

crockery, utensils, dolls and buggies. There was an interest table set up with dinosaurs. The dress up area was neatly organised with costumes. For fine motor development, there was a painting easel, threading activities, scissors, puzzles and prewriting materials such as crayons. A rest area with child sized sofas and cushions was available in the room and the library area was located beside it to allow the children to sit comfortably when using the books. For cognitive development, pattern boards with coloured blocks and laminated pattern sequences were available and used by the children on the day of the inspection. Sand was available to the children for sensory play.

Blossoms Room:

This room supported children in full day care aged three years. The room was divided by shelving units and low dividers to create smaller interest areas for the children. The home corner, in one sectioned off area contained a home corner with a kitchen. In another area, a shelving unit contained baskets of open-ended materials such as plastic bricks and magnet shapes, farm animals and vehicles. There was a library area and cushions and sofas where the children sat for story and song time. A selection of puzzles and threading activities were available to the children.

Willows Room:

This room supported children aged 4-5 years of age. It contained a range of Montessori equipment arranged on shelving that was accessible to the children. These materials supported the children to learn skills such as pouring, threading, and using fine motor skills. In a separate area, puzzles, transport vehicles, musical instruments, plastic bricks and construction materials were available to the children. The home corner contained a kitchen with various cookery objects as well as items for a “tea party”. Sensory materials such as play dough and cutting shapes were available to the children on the day of the inspection.

Outdoor Area:

The outdoor area is directly accessible from three of the care rooms. A separate door is used for two rooms to access the outdoor space. The outdoor area is secure with high level concrete walls and metal locked gates. The round surface consists of a mix of grass, wood chip and concrete paths. On the day the ground surface was muddy due to the winter elements. The children used the muddy areas and puddles of water as opportunities for fun, digging holes and jumping in muddy puddles. Equipment in this area consisted of tyres secured to the ground, balance beams, planter boxes for growing flowers in springtime. A metal boat and wooden train provides opportunities for imaginary play. A sand pit with covering provided opportunities for sensory play. Storage sheds were equipped with bikes trikes and ride on toys, footballs and equipment for gross motor skill development.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that adequate, nutritious and varied food and drink were provided to the children attending the preschool service.

On discussion with the staff members working in the kitchen, they were knowledgeable about all allergies and food preferences of children attending the service. The cook on site spoke with the inspector of how they plan meals in line with the healthy eating policy and work in partnership with families on children’s food preferences and intolerances.

Children attending the sessional service brought their snacks in from home. These consisted of a variety of fruit, yoghurts and sandwiches with a variety of fillings. The morning snack provided by the service included toasted bagels, cream cheese and raisins. Lunch consisted of butternut squash soup, freshly made on site with brown bread. The main meal of the day served was chicken curry and rice.

A review of the four-week menu plan demonstrated that suitable nutritious and varied food was provided, an example included ‘cowboy casserole, beef stew, pasta bake, beef stroganoff, pasta carbonara’. The staff in the service confirmed that alternatives are provided if required.

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 into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service, which prevented persons entering unauthorised and children from leaving the building unsupervised.
- Staff members controlled direct entry to the sessional rooms in the morning, by allowing adults to enter through the back door. This is secured once children have arrived to the service.

- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- Leads and flexes were secure and inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The outdoor perimeter was secure with high concrete walls, waste bins stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules up to date in each care room.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.
- Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.
- The preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation presented in a clean, hygienic condition.
- Perishable items in the children's lunchboxes were refrigerated prior to eating.
- Nappy changes were carried out in line with infection control procedures.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed support plan was in place for one child who had an allergy and staff were aware of their responsibilities regarding same.
- Records were maintained on the safe administration of medication in the service. The records were reviewed and noted to be completed in full on each occasion.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency evacuation doors remained free from hazards throughout the service.
- Fire assembly points clearly displayed in the service car park.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) An immediate action notice was issued on the day of inspection as two hand wash basins observed to be in use had water temperatures exceeding 43 Celsius. In the Willow sanitary accommodation, the temperature was recorded at 46.6° Celsius, and 45.1° Celsius in the Blossoms sanitary accommodation which posed a risk of scalding to the preschool child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

(1) The registered provider issued a response to the immediate action notice issued on the 11 February 2026 which outlined the immediate steps taken to ensure that the taps were not in use until the issue was resolved.

All areas have been fitted with thermostatic mixing valves to regulate hot water and ensure that they are always at an appropriate level for the children to use. All of the hot water taps for wash basins and children's sanitary areas are all fitted with these valves now to ensure the safe use of them for the children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentary evidence of the installation of valves submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions have been reviewed and accepted by the inspectorate. This regulation is now compliant.

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)
On the day of inspection four staff members on duty were trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b).

Fully stocked first aid boxes are available in each of the care rooms and are available to children at all times.

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-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation
- (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)

The person in charge demonstrated that fire evacuation drills were completed on a monthly basis were completed. The most recent fire drill was completed on the 20 January 2026.

(1) (b)

A record of all firefighting equipment with a maintenance date of 03 April 2025 was provided on the day.

(2) (c)

These records were made available to the authorised person on the day.

(3)

The person in charge is aware of the regulatory requirement to maintain these records for the period set out in regulation.

(4)

Emergency evacuation plans and child friendly picture evacuation plans were clearly displayed throughout 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

Supervision was observed to be primarily by sight. On the day staff members were observed to supervise the children in their rooms adequately ensuring that while playing both indoors and outdoors children were always in view of a staff member. Mealtimes were observed to be supervised adequately, staff members sat alongside children promoting independence and offering help with opening yoghurts or cutting food as appropriate. Older children who were toilet trained were encouraged to use the bathroom independently, staff members remained in ear shot to prompt or support if required.

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 a current insurance cover valid until the 27 May 2026. The insurance provided cover for 120 Children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

A number of items in the care rooms were not adequately maintained as required as follows:

- In the 'Olives' sanitary accommodation, one hot water tap was not working.
- In the 'Elms' sanitary accommodation, one hot water tap was not working.

- In the 'willows' sanitary accommodation the only source of ventilation the mechanical extractor fan was not working.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In a written response the registered provider stated:

The Plumber has been out and fixed the hot water tap in the Olives and the Elms room. All taps have now got thermostatic mixing valves to ensure the hot water temperature always stays at an appropriate level for the children.

Willows room sanitary accommodation mechanical extractor fan has been repaired and in working order.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider have been reviewed and accepted.

This regulation is now compliant.