

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY038
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Name of Service:	Little Einstein's Preschool & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	The Old Convent School, Roscrea, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E53 K063
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Bolger
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	03/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney and A McNamara
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	N/A
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Description of service

This full day care service was established in the town of Roscrea in north Tipperary in 2012 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 7am – 6pm for 50 weeks of the year. A registered school age care service is also provided.

The service is operated from rooms on the ground floor of the old convent building, beside the Sacred Heart Convent primary school. The building is multi-storey with the upper floors used for residential accommodation, unconnected with the service. The service consists of three activity rooms, sleep room, office, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas. There is an enclosed outdoor play area at the back of the premises, directly accessible from the Preschool room and a second enclosed playground in the green area in front of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider visits the service daily but does not work directly with the children. This is one of two services operated by the registered provider, who is based in the other service, Clever Clogs, Dunkerrin, Co Offaly. The person in charge daily is the service manager. There are six staff employed in the service to work directly with the preschool children. Additional staff are available to work in the school age care service.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4)(7), 10, 11(1)(2), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(h)(j)(k), 19(1)(b)(2)(3), 22, 23, 27 and 32(1)(2)(3).

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 10 Policies, procedures, etc., of pre-school service: 15 Record of a pre-school child, regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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

The inspection was triggered by information received through concerns on 25 February 2026.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service manager was the person in charge daily. There was a named person who can deputise in her absence.

(b) The person in charge or her deputy was present in the service while it was in operation.

(2) There had been no new staff employed since the last inspection on 25 July 2024. There were two students on work experience or work placement in the service who were not present at the time of the last inspection. The

files for the students and the garda vetting records of staff whose vetting fell due for renewal since the last inspection, were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Written validated references from past employers were available in respect of the students.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, references from a source other than a past employer were available.

(c) Documents relating to completed Garda vetting were available in respect of the students. There was a process in place to ensure that vetting for all staff was repeated on a three-yearly basis in line with the requirements of Tusla.

(d) Not applicable as the students had not lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

(4) Staff employed to work directly with the children held the required qualifications at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7) There was evidence that staff engaged in ongoing training, such as keeping up to date with first aid training. Staff signed to say they had read and understood the policies and procedures of the service, particularly the behaviour management policy and the complaints policy.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies, procedures and statements were reviewed as part of the inspection process and found to contain the required information:

- Statement of purpose and function
- Complaints policy
- Policy on managing behaviour
- Inclusion policy

Non-Compliance Information

The following policies and procedures were available and reviewed but lacked some of the information required:

- Recruitment policy
- Policy on health eating

The service did not have the following policies and procedures which were required for the service:

- Policy on accidents and incidents,
- Risk management policy,
- Supervision of staff policy

It is acknowledged that some of the information required for an accident and incident policy and a risk management policy were contained within the services safety statement but as it did not contain all the information required nor detail the procedures to be followed, it cannot be considered to replace these required policies and procedures.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service have updated all policies required and forwarded them on to the inspectorate. The service will monitor and update all policy requirements as needed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the updated policies and procedures were received by the early years inspector on 23 March 2026.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) On the morning of the inspection there were 6 staff supervising 32 children aged between 2 and 5 years old in two rooms. There were 12 children aged between 2 and 3 years old in the Toddler room and 20 children aged between 3 and 5 years old in the Preschool room. At 1.30pm all children moved to the Preschool room for dinner. The room was divided into two spaces, with 9 children and 2 staff in the Toddler area and 3 staff and 18 children in the Preschool area. The service manager was also present in the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the requirements throughout the day including during times such as staff breaks or when bringing children to the sanitary accommodation area for nappy changing, using the toilet or washing their hands.

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.

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A sample size of 12 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available in the service for inspection by an authorised person.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The records required under parts (h), (i) and (k) of this regulation were assessed as part of the inspection process:

(h) The children's daily attendance, with arrival and departure times, was recorded in a daily attendance register designed for that purpose.

(i) Details of the staff arrival, departure and break times were recorded at the back of the children's daily attendance register in the section specifically for staff. Student's attendance was recorded on separate attendance sheets that were returned to the college after the student placements.

(k) The service kept a record of any accidents that occurred in the service. There was evidence that the details were communicated with parents. The records were signed by a member of staff and a parent.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(k) The service did not record every incident that occurred in the service on the accident and incident forms. Staff stated that incidents were usually communicated to parents verbally at collection time but that a written record was not maintained. For example, if a child ate or drank something that they were not allowed due to allergies or cultural reasons, there was no record that this had occurred, that parents had been informed or that measures were put in place to insure against a re-occurrence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has an incident book placed in each room. Any incidents at all will be monitored and parents will be informed. These are separate to our accident book for the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the new incident book was received by the early years inspector on 23 March 2026.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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-

(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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The children enjoyed freedom of movement and a change of environment during the day. Within each activity room the children had the freedom to move and engage in activities of choice during the day. All the children enjoyed the opportunity to play in the outdoors on the day of inspection, which was a dry, bright day after a long period of rain. The sanitary accommodation area was at the end of the corridor from the activity rooms. The children walked down to the sanitary accommodation area, with a member of staff, several times during the day to wash their hands before meals, to use the toilet or to have their nappies changed. The children's sleep room was adjacent to the Preschool room and could be accessed from either the corridor or from an internal door between the Preschool room and the sleep room. Moving to these spaces gave the children a chance to leave the room regularly which provided a change of environment and physical movement.

The children in the Toddler room were allowed to sleep when they needed to in the sleep room where there were six camp beds with sheets, blankets and pillows. The staff said that the children who had a daytime sleep usually slept after lunchtime, between 11am and 2pm. However, on the morning of the inspection three children were sleepy before lunchtime and all were brought to the sleep room to sleep. The children in the Preschool room did not routinely need daytime sleeps but they could also use the sleep room if required.

Staff were observed to respond to the children’s needs for comfort and reassurance, particularly when they were upset. Children were held or hugged when they demonstrated that this was the type of comfort they wanted. The staff sat at the tables or on the floor where they were available to the children. Some of the younger children were seen climbing into the lap of staff when they were sitting cross-legged on the floor. The children did this particularly when they were tired.

Children and staff sat together at tables in the rooms at mealtimes. Children were given as much time as they needed to eat their meals. Younger children were given help to mash their dinner and were instructed to ‘blow on it’ or make sure it was not too hot before they ate it. Staff fed children who required this type of assistance. Mealtimes were observed to be chatty and relaxed.

Communication books were used in the Toddler room to relay information between parents and staff such as what the children had eaten that day and their toilet or nappy changing times.

(2) The behaviour management policy of the service stated that corporal punishment was never used in the service. Staff said that their usual method of managing disputes between children, which were usually over toys, was to distract them and offer a different toy. In the Preschool room they used visual aids such as sand timers to aid toy sharing.

(3) The behaviour management policy of the service stated that no practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were carried out in respect of a preschool child whilst attending the service.

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 service had a healthy eating policy. The children brought food from home to eat at the morning and evening snack times at 10.45am and 3.15pm. A poster of suggestions for healthy lunches was displayed on the wall beside the entrance door where parents could see it. Parents were also given information about healthy lunches and foods not allowed in the service. On the day of inspection, the children's lunches included: sandwiches, toasties, pasta, brioche rolls, crackers, rice cakes, waffles, cheese, yoghurt drinks, smoothies and fruit (blueberries, bananas, strawberries and peppers). Each child had a drink bottle which was refilled with bottled water throughout the day. The children were offered water or milk to drink.

The service provided a cooked meal to the children at 2pm. On the day of inspection this was mashed potato and savoury mince. There was a notice on the wall of the Preschool room listing each of the dinners served in the three-week rolling menu and detailed which children liked all the meal or only part of it, for example mashed potatoes only, meat only or both. The list also identified the children with cultural diets and allergies.

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 service had a child safeguarding statement which was reviewed by the child safeguarding statement assessment unit of TUSLA in 2025.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe sleep:

A member of staff does not stay in the sleep room with the children while they sleep. As the children sleep on camp beds, from which they can get up and wander around once awake, it is required that the children be supervised by direct observation from a member of staff while they sleep.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe sleep:

The service will ensure one staff member remains in the sleep room with the sleeping children at all times. The service are confident that leaving a staff member stay with the sleeping children will remedy the issue found and prevent reoccurrence.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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

The children were adequately supervised by a member of staff during the day when they were in their activity rooms, in the sanitary accommodation area and in the outdoor play area.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The service had a complaints policy which detailed how a complaint could be made, how a complaint would be dealt with and how the complainant would be kept informed.

(2) The service kept a record of any complaints that were made and ensured that the complaint was dealt with in line with the service's complaints policy.

(3) Complaint records, with details of the complaint and how it was dealt with, were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person. There was one complaint record available to view on the day of inspection.