

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH009
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Name of Service:	Killucan Care Ltd
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Address of Service:	St Joseph's Gardens, Rathwire, Killucan, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 KN34
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ita Copley
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	23/02/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	39
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O'Connor Hughes & K. Murphy
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

This community service provides a full day care service offering fulltime, part time and sessional places. The age range of children that can attend the service is 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 – 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service is located in a purpose-built single storey premises consisting of six pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a kitchen, a staff room and an office. One of the pre-school rooms is not currently in use. Outdoor play areas are attached to the front and side of the service. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is rurally located in the village of Killucan, Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

The service employs twenty adults including the person in charge, sixteen childcare practitioners, a cook, maintenance person and cleaner. A member of the board of management provides accountancy support on a Friday. Fifteen adults were working directly with children on the 23 February 2026. A student on work placement was also present. The registered provider does not work directly with children and was not present during the inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b) (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(3) (4)

Regulation 10 -Policies Procedures etc. of Pre-School Service

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

Regulation 16- Record of a Pre-School Service (c)(h)(i)(k)

Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child - (1)(a)(b) (3)

Regulation 27- Supervision

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises (c)

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19- Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)(b) (3) and Regulation 27- Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the toddler room (Bumblebee) aged 2- 3 years.

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

Information submitted to Tusla on the 11 February and 17 February 2026 informed the inspection.

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.

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

(b)

The designated person in charge and named persons to deputise were present for the duration of the inspection. Following a review of previous inspection findings, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that seven new staff members and one student on work placement had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 24 October 2024. These eight files were reviewed, and the following was noted.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the new staff members and the student.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the new staff members and the student.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. An in date garda vetting disclosure was available for three staff members which required renewal since the last inspection on the 24 October 2024.

(d)

Police vetting was not required. No new staff members had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The person in charge ensured that staff were vetted prior to commencing employment in the service.

(4)

The new staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

A completed workplace induction form detailing training and specific service policies was available for review in respect of the staff who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on the 24 October 2024. Documentation was available to indicate that staff had read and understood the policies and procedures of the service. The person in charge provided documentation relating to regular supervision and job chats in respect of the staff members.

(7)(b)(c)

The person in charge, the deputy and seven early years practitioners held certificates that indicated that they had completed all the training modules relating to the Tusla Quality Regulatory Framework (QRF) as evidence of training undertaken in The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

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 were reviewed and were found to be in keeping with Regulation 10.

- Policy on Managing Behaviour
- Policy on Accidents and Incidents
- Policy on Staff training/Induction
- Policy on Supervision.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

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

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times

Compliance Information

- (1)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.
- (2)
There were sixty-three children attending the service supervised directly by fourteen adults in the morning. There were thirty-nine children attending the service in the afternoon supervised directly by twelve adults.
- (8)(a)
The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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:

(c) details of the adult: child ratios in 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(c)

Details of the adult:child ratios were documented and reviewed for the pre-school rooms.

(h)

Details of children’s daily attendance in the service was documented in the child attendance record in the service.

(i)

A staff roster was available for review with details of staff attendance and cover in the pre-school rooms.

(k)

Two incident forms in respect of children were reviewed and signed by parents.

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

(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.

(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)(a)(b)

Bumble Bee Room

The care practices implemented to support the children's daily routine met the needs of the children attending the service. Children were encouraged to be independent and to feed themselves. Staff sat with children and assisted them as needed during mealtimes. Children enjoyed the spaghetti bolognaise with cheese and garlic bread served by the cook for the main meal with milk and water to drink. Children took their time to enjoy the meal. Children had their nappies changed on a regular basis and as required. Personal care needs were attended to in a caring manner. Spare clothes were available for each child if needed. Children were assisted by staff members to put on their coats and hats for outdoor play. Sleeping children were checked physically by a staff member every ten minutes and sleep checks were noted in the service sleep log.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities and nappy changing. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. The designated person in charge stated team meetings are held on a regular basis with staff and minutes of meetings were available for review.

Low level tables and chairs were in place in the Bumble Bee room. Interest areas included a home corner, arts and crafts, a cosy rest area and a construction area. Children's artwork and family photographs were displayed. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children enjoyed freedom of movement as they moved played in the various interest areas in the indoor and outdoor environments. Children happily engaged in a painting activity supported by staff members.

(3)

Staff used a calm approach using soft language tones, giving positive praise and encouragement to children during the inspection. No behaviour management issues were observed during the inspection. Upon discussion with the inspector staff were familiar with positive behaviour management strategies in line with the behaviour management policy in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

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

Compliance Information

The children were observed to be supervised by sight or sound in the Bumble Bee room and in the outdoor play area by staff members during the inspection. Children were escorted to the nappy changing area under staff supervision. Staff were observed to carry out a head count before children were brought to the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Compliance Information

(c)
The environmental room temperatures of the sleep room met the required sleep room temperatures in line with best practice.
The person in charge stated the air conditioning system was broken in the wobbler room. A new air to water system is currently being installed in the premises which will control room temperatures and maintain the required room occupancy temperature range.