

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH053
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Name of Service:	Grovelands Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	The Weir, Market Point, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 TX2C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Regina Bushell
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	65	PM	32
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & 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).

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Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service and is open from Monday to Friday. A service is provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years. The Early Years' Service is located over a number of adapted apartments on the ground floor of an apartment block. Five pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a breakout room, a kitchen, office and a reception area are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the service. The service is located in an urban setting in a residential area in the town of Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty-three adults including a person in charge, a supervisor, seventeen childcare practitioners, two staff members for school aged childcare, a cook and cleaner. Twenty one of the twenty-three adults were present on 26 May 2026.

The registered provider who does not work directly with children was not present but attended the closing meeting remotely. The director of operations arrived at the service after the inspection had commenced and remained on site for the inspection and the closing meeting.

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.

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Regulation 8 -Notification of Change in Circumstances - (1)

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

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

Regulation 16 – Record of a Pre-school Service - (1)(h)(i)(j)(k)

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

Regulation 20 – Rest and play facilities

Regulation 22- Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance

Regulation 25- First aid - (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 27- Supervision

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 31- Notification of Incidents – (b) (d)

Regulation 32- Complaints (1)(2)(3)

Regulation 33- Furnishing Information to the Agency

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.

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The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy designated person in charge, director of operations, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

(1)
Since the last inspection on 19 July 2024 the service submitted a notification of change in circumstances to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of a change to the hours of operation. This change was approved by Tusla registration office.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The named person to deputise was available as required.

(b)

The named person to deputise was present for the duration of the inspection. The director of operations arrived after the inspection had commenced and remained on site.

Following a review of previous inspection findings, information available on inspection and discussion with the designated person in charge, it was determined that nine childcare practitioners had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 19 July 2024.

The nine staff files were reviewed and the following was noted:

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(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the nine new files reviewed.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the nine files reviewed.

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 in respect of the registered provider and three childcare practitioners which required renewal since the last inspection on the 19 July 2024.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of three new staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The nine new staff members working directly with children held a major award at level 5 to 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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-five children attending the service supervised directly by sixteen adults in the morning.

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There were thirty-two children attending the service supervised directly by nine adults in the afternoon.

(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:

(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)
Written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1) (h)(i)(j) and (k) were available and reviewed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)
The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands before meals and went to the toilet independently under the supervision of staff. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as required. Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing. Individual needs led sleep was in operation if a child wanted to rest or sleep. All children enjoyed moving freely from one play experience to the next in the indoor and outdoor environments. Strollers were available to support the young children to spend

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time outdoors. Sun safe practices were observed with children rotating between spending time outdoors in the sun and periods of time indoors. Temperature controlled environments were available in the pre-school rooms. Sun hats were worn by all children and staff were observed to apply sun protection cream to the children. Staff monitored water intake and children were encouraged to take frequent drinks of water. Baby feeding bottles and soothers were named and stored appropriately in a refrigerator.

Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Staff were observed to offer support and praise to each child for their involvement in activities and the children's choices were supported. Staff provided positive redirection to children and intervened if a minor dispute arose among the children.

Children were encouraged to self-serve their main meal. Staff members sat with children and assisted them as required with conversations and interactions noted between staff and children during the main meal.

A digital system was used to record details relating to each child's daily activities including feeding, sleeping, nappy changing, events and activities. This information was available in real time for parents to review. Verbal feedback and reassurance was provided to a parent collecting their child after spending some scheduled time in the service as part of the settling in practices facilitated by the service.

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 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

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable indoor and outdoor facilities were provided on the premises. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for the children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws, and shape sorters.

(b)

A separate sleep room was available equipped with eight cots. All cots had wheels to aid a prompt evacuation in the event of a fire in the premises. Low level beds were in place for children over the age of two who required rest or sleep during the day. Soft furnishings provided suitable relaxation facilities in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

A large garden area was located to the rear of the service. The perimeter was secured by a high-level fence, foliage and gates. The area has an all-weather surface and a segregated area for younger children to play. A small, sheltered play area was noted. The outdoor play area was equipped with age and stage appropriate bikes, trikes, climb and slide units and covered sand trays.

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

Parents and guardians provided the mid-morning snack for children attending the ECCE session. A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable food products. For children attending on a full day care basis all meals and snacks were freshly prepared on site by the cook. A rotating three-week menu plan was followed. Provision was in place to cater for any dietary needs. Fruit bowls were available in the pre-school rooms and additional food was available for any child if required.

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The children drank water which was readily accessible to the children throughout the inspection. The children were observed to eat a variety of sandwiches, wraps and crackers with fillings as well as a selection of fruit, vegetable and dairy products.

The mid-morning snack consisted of a yoghurt, fruit and a plain wholemeal biscuit. The main meal was a beef lasagne or vegetarian alternative served with garlic bread. Milk and water were offered at the snacks and meals. Feeding bottles for young children were brought to the service and stored in a refrigerator. A bottle warmer was used to safely reheat feeding bottles for young 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 service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Indoor and outdoor safety checklists were in place. Temperature logs were in place to monitor and record the temperature of the refrigerators in the service.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel, liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas. Children were observed to wash their hands on return from outdoor play, before meals and after using the toilet. Foot operated pedal bins were available in the sanitary accommodation and in the pre-school rooms for the hygienic disposal of waste. Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school rooms. Mechanical ventilation was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Emergency medication and individual emergency plans were in place for those children with defined medical conditions. The administration of medication documentation was available and reviewed and correct procedures were in place for the administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

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A digital sleep log was in place indicating that the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was monitored every ten minutes. The temperature of the sleep room was monitored by staff. The temperature recorded was 19°Celsius on the service thermometer.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed and a fire assembly point was noted to the rear of the premises.

Outing:

The outings policy, a risk assessment and checklist were reviewed in respect of the annual outing from the service to a pet farm on the 13 June 2025.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

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(b)

A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service. The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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 adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). The roster indicated that FAR cover was provided during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box or cabinet was available in various locations throughout the premises.

(b)

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

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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 firefighting 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

(1)(a)

There was a record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 14 May 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced on the 21 January 2026 and 5 March 2026.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

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

Children were supervised by staff during play activities both indoors and outdoors. A staff member supervised the children's use of the toilet and handwashing.

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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 2027.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:

(b) the diagnosis of a pre-school child attending the service, an employee, unpaid worker, contractor or other person working in the service as suffering from an infectious disease within the meaning of the Infectious Diseases Regulations 1981 (S.I. No. 390 of 1981);

(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;

Compliance Information

Since the last inspection on 19 July 2024 the person in charge had submitted the required notification of incidents to the Early Years Inspectorate in respect of (b) and (d).

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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 complaints policy was available and reviewed. The relevant details in respect of (a)(b)(c) were noted in the policy.
- (2)(a)(b)
- Records indicate that the service held information in respect of (a) and (b).
- (3)(a)(b)
- The records were available for review by the Inspector.

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Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The designated person in charge furnished the information required for the inspection.