

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH082
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Name of Service:	Giggles Pre-School & Childcare CLG
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Address of Service:	The Arches, Donore, Streamstown, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 CK77
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Name of Registered Provider:	Veronica Lynam
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Day 1 Date of Inspection:	15/05/2026
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Day 2 Date of Inspection:	22/05/2026
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Day 1 No of pre-school children:	AM	0	PM	0
Day 2 No of pre-school children:	AM	74	PM	61

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.
Day 1 Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy & C.O' Connor Hughes
Day 2 Inspection undertaken by:	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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis. A school aged childcare facility is provided. The service is operated by an independent provider. Children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme avail of an exclusively outdoor experience.

The Early Years' Service is located in a single storey purpose-built extension to the home of the registered provider. One large pre-school room (butterfly room) and two sleep rooms are provided. In the outdoor area a standalone industry grade kitchen, four pre-school areas (oak, willow, larch and hazel cabins) and an office are provided. Extensive outdoor play areas are attached to the rear of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is rural in its location outside the village of Streamstown, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered provider employs twenty-three staff members including an administrator, a supervisor, a cook who can provide relief cover, a maintenance person, three school aged staff, fifteen childcare practitioners and a relief practitioner.

Day 1

On 15 May 2026 no children were present and all staff were engaged in preparation for the service graduation which took place on 16 May 2026.

Day 2

The registered provider, a designated person in charge and fourteen childcare practitioners were working directly with children on 22 May 2026.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) (4)

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

Regulation 15- Record of a Pre-school Child

Regulation 16 – Record of a Pre-school Service

Regulation 17- Information for Parents

Regulation 18 – Copy of the Act

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)(2)(3)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Regulation 33- Furnishing Information to the Agency

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

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

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and staff who were present on day 1 of the inspection.

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on day 2 of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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*

(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 person in charge and deputy person in charge were present and available in the service throughout both inspection days.

(b)

The registered provider and the deputy person in charge were on site for the duration of the inspection.

Twenty-four files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The required number of written validated references were available in respect of twenty-three files reviewed from past employers or from a source other than a past employer. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

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

In respect of twenty three of the twenty-four files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of one of the twenty- four files reviewed. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of two adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of qualification recognition from the Minister.

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,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

Day 1- There were no children in attendance.

Day 2- There were seventy-four children present in the morning and sixty-one children present in the afternoon supervised directly by sixteen adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)

In a sample review of twelve records of children enrolled in the service information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (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)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k) were available and reviewed.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parental information was available in a handbook which was emailed to parents and guardians prior to their child commencing in the service. The parent handbook contained the required information in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider presented a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013) of the Act and Regulations which was available for inspection by (a)(b)(c).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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. Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent and their choices were supported.

The staff used positive language with the children and intervened in the event of minor disputes.

Children received hugs and affection from the staff members who were familiar with the children, their likes and dislikes and the significant people in the lives of the children.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences and materials were available for the children in the indoor and outdoor environments. Children were observed enjoying and moving freely from one play experience to the next in the outdoor environments. Play equipment and open-ended materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wished to engage with specific chosen activities. There was good communication observed between the adult and child during nappy changing. Rest and sleep for children was facilitated on an individual basis in line with the needs and preferences of the children.

Parents are welcome to the service and extended family members attended the recent service graduation. An end of the month "spiel" is circulated to the parents via a social media platform and provides a summary of the events, activities and themed based play events and activities for the month. During the month of April events and activities were farm related including food from the farm and farm safety. Cultural activities relating to Malawi included traditional dress, games, songs and food.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, dress up, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Two sleep rooms were available in the service. Each sleep room was equipped with five cots.

Low level beds were available for children over the age of two who required sleep. Soft furnishings provided the rest areas in the pre-school rooms.

(3)(a)

The outdoor area was accessed directly from the pre-school rooms. The outdoor play area was safe and secure with the perimeter secured by high level fencing. Natural grass, artificial grass and tarmac surface areas were noted. The outdoor play area was separated into areas for older and younger children. A variety of toys and play equipment for use by the children was available that included slides, a playhouse, tunnels, play bricks, a spaceship, basketball stand, bicycles and tricycles and included a farm and shop themed imaginative play areas.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 ECCE children. A variety of sandwiches wraps and crackers with fillings as well as a selection of fruit, vegetable and dairy products were observed.

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 four-week menu plan was followed. Provision was in place to cater for any dietary needs and additional food was available for any child if required.

The mid-morning snack consisted of natural yoghurt and fruit. A light meal consisting of brown bread, ham, sweetcorn and boiled eggs was served at 12:30 with the main meal being served in the afternoon and consisting of fish fingers, mashed potato and baked beans. Milk and water were offered at the snacks and meals.

The children availed of water which was readily accessible to the children throughout the inspection.

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 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.

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 and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas. Children were observed to wash their hands 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Mechanical ventilation was available in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing areas. The nappy changing practice observed adhered to the service procedure which was displayed in the nappy changing areas.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely out of the reach of the children. Emergency medication and individual healthcare 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:

A 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 side of the premises.

Outing:

The outings policy, a risk assessment and checklist were reviewed in respect of outings from the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider stated in the response that the garda vetting disclosure for this staff member was applied for prior to the inspection and has recently returned. (garda vetting disclosure included).

The service has made a change to the procedure on addressing staff garda vetting needs and highlighted that any vetting renewals will now be applied for a minimum of 12 weeks in advance of the renewal date.

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective actions taken documentary evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

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)(b)

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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)

Eleven adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

First aid boxes were located in accessible locations in the service.

(b)

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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)

A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 14 April 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 25 March 2026.

(2)

Records were open to inspection to (a)(b)(c).

(3)

The registered provider ensured the records were held for a five-year period.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 the 27 March 2027.

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's 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(3)(a)(b)

The records were available for review by the Inspector.

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 registered provider furnished the information required for the inspection.