

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW149		
Name of Service:	Little Ladybirds Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Slane Lusk, Dunganstown West, Kilbride, Wicklow, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A67 W603		
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Delahunt		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	27/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray,Co. Wicklow		
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke		
Title:	Early Years Inspector		

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

Description of service

Little Ladybirds Pre-school was first established in 2007. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age on a sessional basis.

The registered provider operates a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday 09.00am to 12.00pm. The service operates from a purpose-built extension attached to the registered provider's home.

There are two pre-school rooms and both rooms were operational on the day of inspection. There is a large outdoor area located at the rear of the premises, which includes a sheltered area, so the children can play outside daily, even in inclement weather.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and employs three additional adults. All four adults were present on the day of 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.

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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

Following a conversation with the registered provider it was confirmed that they and three additional adults work in the pre-school service and all four staff files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability.

(2)(a)(b)

Validated written references were available in respect of four adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of four adults.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months since turning 18 years of age.

(4)

Four adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A)

There was one adult employed pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained during the inspection. There were 4 adults present with 20 children

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)

There was a calm and relaxed atmosphere in the pre-school throughout the morning. Adults were observed to be warm and kind towards the children in their care evidenced by soft language tones and use of the children's individual names during activities.

The adults supported children at play in both individual and small group activities showing them how to share and take turns and praising them for their efforts.

The pre-school rooms were well laid out with age-appropriate materials and equipment which was easily accessible on the low-level shelving provided.

All snacks and a healthy lunch were provided by parents. Drinking water was freely available and children also had their own individual drinking containers.

Lunch was observed to be an enjoyable and relaxed event. All children were observed to have freedom of movement within their rooms.

Transitions from one activity to another was seamless and unrushed. The children were observed to be children were happy to go from one activity to the next.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main door to the pre-school service was securely locked on arrival of the inspector to the service.
- All toys examined were in good condition and equipment was suitable, age appropriate and in good working order.
- All cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit routes in the pre-school rooms were free from obstruction and clearly marked.

Infection Control:

- There were sanitary areas located in the pre-school service. There was warm running water at 30°C, liquid soap and paper towels available.
- A foot pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas and in the pre-school rooms for the safe disposal of used paper towels and other waste matter.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time, in addition to full cleaning of the pre-school rooms following the children's home time.
- Hand washing by the adults and children was observed before snacks, after using the toilet and outdoor play.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in the service.

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 registered provider ensured that all children attending the pre-school were checked in and out on the service register.

(3)(a),(i-iv)

The registered provider ensured that no other person other than the agreed list of people had access to the pre-school.

(b)

The registered provider had a record in writing in the form of a visitors' book of all such persons who accessed the pre-school.

(4)

The registered provider was able to demonstrate that the visitors' book was kept for a period of one year from the dates to which it related.

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)
Three adults were trained in FAR (first aid response) and were available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place within one of the pre-school rooms.

(b)
The first aid box was available to the children attending the service at all times

art 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-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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 having taken place in the pre-school service. The last recorded fire drill was 11 December 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment and smoke detection equipment on the premises dated August 2025 and 16 January 2026 respectively.

(2)(c)

The above record referred to in paragraph (1) was open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

There was a notice of procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency, displayed in each pre-school room.