

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW254
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Name of Service:	Little Explorers Childcare
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Address of Service:	The Charlesland Centre, Charlesland Grove, Charlesland, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 A266
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gina McGarry
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	76	PM	69
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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 and S. Early O'Brien
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

This full day care service was first established in 2015. The premises is a purpose built, two storey building with four care rooms, a sleep room, an office, staff room, laundry room and kitchen.

There is a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises, which the children have access to on a daily basis. The service is located in the urban setting of Greystones Co. Wicklow.

This service is privately owned and is registered to provide care and education for children aged between one years and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07.00 hrs and 18.30 hrs (including a sessional Early Childhood and Education Scheme (ECCE) service from 09.30 hrs to 12.30 hrs for 38 weeks of the year).

Staffing

There are currently 23 adults employed in the service. Twenty adults were present on the day of inspection, plus two additional care staff who arrived after the start of the inspection to support the person in charge. The staff members employed included, the person in charge, assistant manager and the full-time chef. The registered provider does not work in the service. The senior manager arrived to help with the inspection. A total of 26 files were reviewed 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

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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 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,*

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(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

There were 14 new adults employed in the service since the last inspection 25 April 2025, their files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspectors and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of 26 adults.

(c)

Completed three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for 26 adults.

(d)

International police vetting was available for 12 adults who had lived outside the State for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-five adults held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or had a qualification deemed equivalent.

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

(2)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were 22 adults employed and present with 76 children on the day of inspection.

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

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.

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

Drinking water was freely available and children also had their own individual drinking containers.

Lunch was observed to be an enjoyable and relaxed event and there was additional food available for all children who wanted it. All children were observed to have freedom of movement within their rooms.

Transitions from one activity to another was seamless and unrushed and children were happy to go from one activity to the next. It was evident from the atmosphere in the care rooms that there is a strong ethos of teamwork between the adults and this was reflected in the interactions of the children with the staff and the other children in their room.

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 service was securely locked on arrival of the inspectors 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 route in each care room was free from obstruction and clearly marked.
- There was documented evidence of daily risk assessments having been carried out in the service.
- All emergency routes in the care rooms were clearly marked and free from obstruction.
- Head counts of children were carried out before leaving their care room and after arriving in the outdoor area.
- The outdoor area was suitable, safe and secure.

Infection Control:

- Cleaning schedules for all care rooms and for the remainder of the premises were available and maintained.
- Each care room had access to a sanitary area, with toilets, changing tables, warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.

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- Children's soothers were stored in individual containers and named accordingly, cleaning and storing of soothers was included in the daily cleaning policy of the service.
- A foot pedal bin was available in all sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all care rooms and the nappy changing areas.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time as was hand washing by adults and children before snacks, after using the toilet and after returning from the outdoor area.

Administration of Medication:

Twelve administration of medication documents were reviewed. Written parental consent for the administration of medication was required and there were procedures in place to safely administer anti-febrile medication to a child should it be required. There was a care plan and in date medication available for one child who had known anaphylaxis.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep observations were recorded at 10 minutes intervals on an electronic pad. Breathing, position and colour was observed and recorded for 11 children sleeping in cots and later for a further 16 children on low level beds in the Nest room on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

An in-date record of monthly fire drills, in addition to annual certification of fire equipment and smoke detection system were available for review on the day of inspection.