

# TUSLA REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2016DL003

**Name of Service:** Honey Bees Pre-school

**Address of Service:** Main Street,  
Muff,  
Co. Donegal F93 H2TH

**Email Address:** honeybeespreschool@outlook.com

**Name of Registered Service Provider:** Susan McColgan & Donna McGonigle

**Type of Service Registered:** **Part-Time**

**Date(s) of Inspection:** 1 6 1 2 2 0 2 1

**No of Pre-School Children present during Inspection:** **AM** 38 **PM** 2

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Tusla Early Years Inspectorate,  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor, St. Conal's Campus,  
Kilmacrenan Road,  
Letterkenny,  
Donegal F95 XK94

**Inspection undertaken by:** M. Skelly  
**Title:** Early Years Inspector

Areas which were the subject of this Inspection		
Governance	Health Welfare and Development of Child	Safety

**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

<b>Description of Service</b>	<p>Honey Bees Pre-school is an early years service situated the town of Muff in north County Donegal. The service which commenced operation in 2016 is privately owned by a partnership. A part-time day care service is provided for children aged 2 – 6 years. A school age service is not currently provided. The service operates weekday mornings with staggered arrival and departure times for the different playrooms which include a three-hour sessional service.</p>
<b>Premises</b>	<p>The service occupies part of a commercial unit over two floors which has been extensively adapted for the provision of the pre-school service. There are three playrooms, one at ground floor level and two at first floor. The premises also includes an office, storage and sanitary facilities. A spacious outdoor play area is directly accessible from the ground floor playroom. The service also has access to a large field adjoining the outdoor play area.</p>
<b>Staffing</b>	<p>A total of nine adults were employed in the service at the time of inspection. This included both registered providers and six other adults who worked directly with children. The eighth adult provided general assistance for the service. Each of the adults working directly with children held a relevant qualification in early childhood care and education. There was one student on educational placement in the service at the time of inspection.</p>
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>Tusla’s Early Years Inspectorate (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.</p> <p>The findings on inspection are based on;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Information obtained through examination of documentation</li> <li>• Direct observation</li> <li>• Discussion with relevant staff</li> </ul> <p>This inspection was unannounced and focused on areas of Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of Child and Safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection process has been amended to minimise the amount of time that inspectors spend in the service. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 health welfare and development of child and regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Honeybees playroom and did not include the other two playrooms.</p> <p>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.</p>
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	<p>The Inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.</p>

## GOVERNANCE

### Part III - Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

- (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—
- consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
  - consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
  - 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
  - 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.
- (6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who—
- has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and
  - is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date
- (6A is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of "paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)" for "paragraphs (5) and (6)", and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): "
- (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:

#### (2) Vetting of Adults

From a total of ten adults in the service at the time of inspection, the vetting documentation for three employee staff and one student which were employed in the service since the services last inspection of 2018 were reviewed. These met the requirements of the regulation with regards to the following:

- Two written references from past employers, in particular their most recent employer for two adults and one past employer reference for the other two adults.
- A second reference from a source other than a past employer was on file for two adults.
- Satisfactory vetting disclosure documents issued from the National Vetting

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### Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

Bureau of the Garda Síochána was available for each adult.

- (d) Police vetting documentation for one adult who had resided for a period of over six months outside of the jurisdiction of Ireland was on file for one adult. The recorded history of past employment and relevant experiences on file indicated that this was not required for the other three adults.

**(4) Qualification in Childcare**

Relevant documentation of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework was on file for eight adults and was not required for the auxiliary worker who did not work directly with children, or for the student who was undergoing training in childcare.

**(6)(a)**

Not applicable. A ministerial letter of exemption for the qualification requirement for adults who had signed a declaration of intention to retire within a specified period was not required for any adult in the service.

**(6(A))**

Not applicable. The qualification exemption for adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model was not required for any adult in the service.

## 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)**

It was evidenced that an adequate number of adults worked with children attending the service. During the morning of the inspection, there were eight adults working directly with thirty-eight children in three separate playrooms with at least two adults present in each playroom. A sample review of completed attendance records for other days showed that an adequate number of adults for the numbers of children attending were also present on those occasions.

**(2)**

The findings at inspection and the planned staff roster records reviewed demonstrated that the minimum required adult/child ratios were adhered to in the service. A part-time day care service was provided for children aged 2 to 6

## Part III - Management and Staff

### Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels

years. The following is an example of the adult child ratios provided during the morning of the inspection. The student and auxiliary staff member who are not eligible for calculation in the ratio provisions, are therefore excluded in the following findings.

- In the Honeybees playroom, there were 17 children present for the sessional service. All were aged between 3 to 6 years. Three adults were present which included one adult employed to provide additional support under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIMS). The minimum required adult: child ratio of 1: 11 was therefore met.
- In the Butterfly playroom, there were 16 children present for the sessional service. All were aged between 3 to 6 years. Two adults were present. The minimum required adult: child ratio of 1: 11 was therefore met.
- In the Ladybird playroom, there were five children attending the sessional service. One child was aged 2 - 2½ years and four were aged 2½- 4 years. Two adults were present. The minimum required adult: child ratio of 1: 5 for children aged 1 - 2½, and 1:11 for children aged 2½- 6 years was therefore met.
- For the extended part – time day care hours, three children were present. All were aged between 3 to 6 years. Two adults worked directly with the children while other adults were also present. The minimum required adult: child ratio of 1:8 for this age group was therefore met.

(8)(a)

At least two adults were rostered to be present at all times during the hours of operation. This was evident on the day and from the sample review of the planned roster and completed attendance records for other days.

## HEALTH WELFARE & DEVELOPMENT OF CHILD

### 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.

Compliance Information:

(1)(a)

Three of the four subsections of this part of the regulation were reviewed for this focused inspection. The Honeybees playroom was selected as the main focus for the inspection, and to a much lesser degree for the other two playrooms. The requirements of this regulation were met as evidenced in the following finding:

#### **BASIC NEEDS**

Food and Drink: Children's food and drink provisions were provided from home. A

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

suitable snack was required to be provide for children attending the sessional service and a meal and snack for children attending for the part-time day care hours. The service had a healthy eating policy which provided guidance to parents and promoted healthier options. On the day, the food and drinks consumed by the children reflected the services healthy eating approach. These included filled sandwiches or similar, fresh fruits, dairy produce and water drinks. The service had a supply of crockery, cutlery and drinking beakers. The adults provided support and supervision during snack and mealtime.

**Toileting and Personal Care:** Toilet trained children were able to access the toilets promptly whenever they needed. An adult remained nearby to supervise the handwashing afterwards and to provide assistance when this was required. Nappy change facilities were provided and used for a small number of children who were not toilet trained. Disposable tissues were provided in each playroom for children to blow their noses when needed. Waterproof aprons were provided next to messy play and painting areas for protecting children’s clothes during these activities. Wet suits were supplied by the service for children playing outdoors while parents provided wellingtons. Each child had a designated area for storing their coats and bags.

**Movement and Rest:** A play-based ethos was implemented where children were provided with freedom to move freely about their playroom and select play activities of their choosing. Adult initiated activities such as circle time where children were required to remain seated were limited to short periods. The use of the outdoor play area was maximised during the day with all of the children playing outdoors during the inspection. Outdoor play resources supported a range of gross motor activities including running, cycling and climbing. Each playroom contained an area with comfortable seating where children could rest or relax. Floor beds and bed linen was available for any child that required a daytime nap.

**Behaviour Support:** A positive approach to managing children’s behaviour was observed in practice. The adults used clear language and simple guidelines for children to follow. Positive behaviour was rewarded through recognition and praise. Children were encouraged to engage in co-operative tasks such as tidying up and returning play items at the end of an activity. Circle time required children to take turns, to listen and to share within a group. Transitions were announced in advance and well-managed, so children did not become impatient when moving from one activity to the next. The general structure of a daily routine helped younger children to feel safe and secure and helped them to anticipate and co-operate with what would happen next. The HighScope conflict resolution approach was used as the framework for managing behaviour incidents. On one occasion during a dispute over play materials, the adult initiated a resolution by first asking “what is happening” and then assisting both children to come to an agreed solution. During the inspection, children were observed to respond well to the guidance given by the

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### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

adults and showed awareness of what behaviour was expected of them.

#### RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN

**Adult Child Interactions:** A keyworker system was operated where adults were assigned to a named group of children to allow for consistency in the care and support provided to them. The adults present throughout the inspection showed a caring and attentive approach with the children. They showed familiarity with each child's personal traits and interests. They used warm vocal tones and friendly disposition when engaged with the children. They listened attentively when children spoke and encouraged their efforts through meaningful conversations and praise.

**Supporting Relationships around Children:** Children were supported to engage positively with each other and were taught simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing resources, and engaging with their peers in group tasks and activities. Snack break was used as an opportunity for children to come together. There were many nice interactions observed between the adults and children and between children during this time. Christmas music played softly in the background adding to the relaxing atmosphere. The prominent and numerous displays of children's art works and photographs provided them with a sense of recognition and being valued, while the family photograph displayed on the family tree provided a visual link with their home.

**Staff Supports:** Both registered providers worked directly in the service and were on-site for providing supervision and support to the other team members. Good communication between adults was observed around organising the day's activities and care of the children. Phone links were used to contact staff in other playrooms when needed. General staff meetings were held on average once a month. The inspector was informed that staff in each playroom came together to forward plan the next stage of the curriculum. A phone messaging facility was also used for communicating with staff.

**Partnership with Parents:** During the COVID-19 period, parents and guardians of children no longer entered the premises. Relevant communication on the services policies and procedures were communicated to parents at enrolment. The room leader engaged in informal feedback at drop off and collection times. A electronic software application was used to communicate updates on their child's learning and development during the year. Each child also had a hard copy individual learning journal which parents received at the end of the year.

#### PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

**Indoor Play Facilities:** Three indoor playrooms were provided by the service. These included the Honeybees room at ground floor and the Butterfly and Ladybird playrooms at the first floor. Each playroom was provided with a wide range of play

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### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

resources which were grouped to create different areas of interest. Suitable sized tables and chairs were provided for tabletop activities and for adults to sit alongside children at their level. Comfortable seating was provided where children could relax, and floor rugs where children could comfortably engage in floor play activities. Open, low level shelving units were used to display many of the play items. These allowed the play materials to be clearly visible and accessible and supported children's self-directed play. Wall displays included, decorative wall murals, family tree photographs, educational posters and gallery areas containing children's artwork. Hanging ceiling garlands also added additional visual appeal. The Christmas festival was also evident in many of the decorative features displayed in all areas, including hallways of the facility.

**Indoor Play Resources:** The Honeybees playroom predominantly catered for children attending their first funded pre-school year. The room contained numerous interest areas which supported different types of play and skill mix. The library area contained a display shelf of picture story books based on the theme of Christmas. Comfortable seating in this area encouraged a relaxed browsing through books and an early interest in reading. The home corner consisted of play kitchen units with common kitchen and household objects. A tall dolls house filled with movable furniture and figures also provided for role and pretend play. One area was set out for construction activities with large wooden blocks, plastic tubing and workbench tools to name some. A wrapping station was set up beside this for children to wrap boxes in Christmas paper. An arts and crafts area contained wall mounted white and black boards and range of paints, crayons and collage materials. In another area, a shelf unit contained various jigsaws, shape sorters and manipulative play items to encourage children's problem solving and fine manipulative skills. A decorated Christmas tree and crib display added to the theme of Christmas in the room.

The Butterfly and Ladybird playrooms contained similar types of play resources as those provided in the Honeybees room. The Ladybird room contained play items suitable for the slightly younger age group of children attending there.

There was a substantial stock of additional play resources held in walk in store facilities, one off the Honeybees playroom and the other off the Butterfly room. These were readily accessible to staff and allowed for the rotation of play materials and resources to support different curricular themes during the year.

**Outdoor Play Facility:** A spacious outdoor play area was provided along one side of the premises. Further development of the area had taken place since the services last inspection to include additional interest areas. A pebble stone pathway connected the main interest areas which included sections under bark, impact absorbing surfacing and gravel. There was an emphasis on creating nature-based play areas. The inspector was informed that the service had permitted use of a large adjoining field which was used for nature study, football and other games. Despite

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

its location in the middle of the town, the outdoor play area visually created a sense of being in the countryside.

Outdoor Play Resources: The area provided a variety of outdoor play experiences for children. The small, closely knit group of trees called the “Enchanted Forest” now contained a low-level tree house and a wooden painted ship and anchor. Opposite this was a section containing a climb and slide unit and large rubber tyres. The Ladybird playroom had their own dedicated play shed filled with toys. There was a large chime unit and construction area near this. In front was a newly developed and very pretty mud kitchen section which included hanging chinaware, a metal teapot and cookware, mini flowerpots, and decorative fairy lights and flower motifs. At the opposite end was the vegetable garden with large, raised planters. Another section was used for ride on toys. An open front stone shed building was the farm station. This contained different breeds of hens and a pet rabbit. There was also a life size spaceman scarecrow made by the children as part of a local festival.

## 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:

Relevant measures were in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to provide a safe environment for the children.

#### GENERAL SAFETY:

- General Security:

The premises was appropriately secured so that children could not exit unnoticed or adults could not enter without permission. The main entrance doors to the building remained locked and only opened for the arrival and departure of children. The outdoor play area was bordered by appropriate height fencing.

- Stair Safety:

The stair access to the first floor contained a non-slip surface and double handrail for both adults and children. A stair gate was provided at the top of the stairs to prevent children leaving without adult assistance.

- Control of Hazards

Cleaning products and equipment were securely stored with smaller cleaning products stored on high level shelves in the playrooms. The main waste bins were inaccessible to the children. The kitchenette area contained a gate barrier so children could not enter. There were no trailing electrical cables or electrical hazards noted. The hot water provided at the children’s wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature (below 43°centigrade) for hand washing. Information was provided to parents with regards to avoiding choking hazards in the

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snacks provided by them for their child's lunch.

- **Equipment Safety**

The play equipment and play materials both indoors and outdoors in use on the day were noted to be in good repair and did not pose a risk of injury. These were appropriate for the age range of children catered for in the service. Impact resistance surfacing was provided under and around the outdoor climb and slide unit. Shelving units consisted of open low- level units. These had stable bases and provided a low risk of being toppled and causing injury.

#### **INFECTION CONTROL:**

- **COVID-19 precautions**

The service was implementing the changes recommended by the national Health, Protection and Surveillance Centre arising from the COVID-19 pandemic. Some of these procedures are detailed in the following infection control measures taken.

- **Hand Hygiene**

Regular hand hygiene practices were carried out. Children were observed washing their hands on arrival, after toileting, painting and outdoor play activities and immediately prior to snack break. A supply of soap and disposable paper toweling was provided at each wash hand basin. Posters were displayed to remind children of good hand washing technique. Adults were observed carrying out regular hand washing. Alcohol based hand sanitizer dispensers were provided, predominantly for adult use.

- **Respiratory Etiquette**

The adults wore face masks in each room when engaged with children and when communicating with parents. A supply of disposable tissues and waste bin was provided in each playroom for children to clean their noses when needed. Posters were displayed to prompt good respiratory practices.

- **Cleaning**

All areas of the facility appeared to be clean and well maintained. There were appropriate cleaning facilities provided. These included separate mops for cleaning toilet area and playroom and a stock of detergent and disinfectant products and disposable paper toweling. Cleaning schedules were prominently displayed for easy referral and records of completed cleaning tasks were maintained on a daily basis. Laundering of soft furnishings and linens were completed off site.

- **Social distancing**

Each playroom was maintained as a separate pod with the same children and adults assigned to these each day. The small numbers of children attending the extended part-time day care service did come together to one area of the Honeybees

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

playroom. The provider detailed to the inspector how this was risk assessed and managed. There were separate timetabled periods allocated to children attending the Honeybees and Butterfly playrooms for use of the outdoor play area as children from the Ladybird playroom had their own dedicated section within the area. The provider had installed floor to ceiling light permeable panelling between the Honeybees playroom and the access door to the outdoor play area to provide a closed off corridor route to the outdoor play area. The parents and guardians of children attending the service no longer entered the facility and drop off and collection was carried out at the entrance door. There were staggered arrival and departure times for each of the three playrooms to minimise the numbers congregating at the entrance area during those times. A COVID-19 notice was prominently displayed at the entrance and all adults arriving were noted to adhere to the distancing measures.

- Ventilation

Increased ventilation measures were in place with playroom windows kept partially opened during the session. The mechanical ventilation provided in the enclosed toilet areas was actively operating. Meaningful outdoor play time was timetabled each day for children where the risk of air born infection was significantly lowered. This also provided a period for the air in playrooms to be refreshed. All of the children played outdoors during the inspection.

- COVID – 19 Incident Plan

An incident plan was in place in the event a child or adult presenting with symptoms associated with COVID-19 while in the service. The adults were familiar with what to do in the event a child or adult presented with Covid related symptoms. An isolation area was identified which allowed for a suitable distance from others, well ventilated and easily cleaned. A supply of person protective equipment (PPE) was also maintained and easily accessible to the adults. Up to date records of attendances were maintained to support contact tracing in the event this was required. This included any visiting personnel including the inspector carrying out the inspection on the day.

- Other infection control measures

Each playroom was supplied with a refrigerator. Children's snacks provided from home which contained produce with the potential to cause a gastric infection if maintained at room temperature were refrigerated on arrival. The poultry maintained by the service were registered with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine to assist the department in the event a relevant infection outbreak posed a risk to human health. Moldable playdough used by the children was discarded after use on the day it was used. Regular pest control measures were in place.

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**FIRE SAFETY:**

All exit routes leading to the outdoors were free from obstruction. Records showed that fire drills had been carried out each month during the current pre-school year. This allowed for children and adults to be familiar with the procedure in the event of a real fire.

**SAFE SLEEP:**

The safe sleep measures to prevent sudden infant death syndrome did not apply here the service did not cater for children two years or under.

## 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)

Each of the adults working with children had up to date training in first aid for children.

(2)

A suitably equipped first aid box was provided in each playroom. These were,

(a) purpose designed first aid boxes with first aid markings which made them easily identifiable. These were safely stored at high-level above children's reach, and

(b) the location of the first aid boxes ensured that these were readily accessible to provide prompt first aid treatment to children in the event this was required.