

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2020KE001

Name of Service: Kildare Village Little Stars

Address of Service: 3 Cunnaberry House, Oak Tree, Tully Road, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare

Eircode: R51 W264

Name of Registered Provider: Katarzyna Wlodarska

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 01/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Primary Care Centre
Church Avenue
Tullamore
Co Offaly
R35K1W4

Inspection undertaken by: A Spain

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 Not applicable.

Description of service

Kildare Village Little Stars is a full day care service located on the ground floor of a two storey detached building in Kildare town. The service is operational between the hours of 8.00am and 6.00pm. The service cares for children in the age range 2 to 6 years. Rooms in use in the service include a reception area, three playrooms, sanitary accommodation for children, a nappy changing room and laundry area, a staff toilet with ability access, an office, a store room for both cleaning equipment and a separate store room for toys and equipment. An outdoor play area is provided on site. School going children are accommodated in a school age service.

Staffing

The service is staffed by eight staff members. A cook is also employed to work directly in the kitchen in the service. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 – Staffing levels,

Regulation 16 – Records in relation to pre-school service,

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of child,
Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play,
Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
Regulation 25 – First aid,
Regulation 26 – Fire safety measures,
Regulation 28 – Insurance.

The scope of the inspection included all rooms in use in the service and the outdoor play area.

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 person in charge, area manager who arrived during the course of the inspection, 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The service had both a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge and the named person to deputise were present in the service on the arrival of the inspector and were present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Staff were observed to be familiar with their roles and responsibilities as they both engaged in play activities with the children in the rooms and looked after their care needs throughout the inspection.

(2) The inspector reviewed the staff files presented by the person in charge, for the nine staff working directly in the service.

(a)(b)

Two written and validated references from past employers were held on file in respect of six staff members. Two written and validated references from sources other than past employers were held on file in respect of one staff member. A written and validated reference from both a past employer and a reputable source were held on file in respect of the remaining two staff members.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were held on file in respect of the nine staff members working in the service and the registered provider. In respect of eight 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. Please also refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was held on file in respect of the four staff members who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(4) Records held on file confirmed that all 8 staff working directly with the children held qualifications in childcare at Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 6 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) The three playrooms in use in the service were open on the day of inspection. An adequate number of adults worked and cared for the children present in the three rooms over the course of the inspection.

(2)

The adult to child ratio was maintained, as evidenced by the following observations made on the day of inspection.

Morning service:

- One staff member cared for six children aged 2 to 3 years of age in Twinkle Stars at 10.10am.
- One staff member cared for six children aged 2 to 3 years of age in Raising Stars at 10.20am.
- Three staff members cared for 18 children aged 3 to 5 years of age in Shining Stars at 10.27am.

Afternoon service:

- One staff member cared for four children aged 2 to 3 years of age in twinkle stars room at 2.56pm.
- One staff member cared for six children aged 2 to 3 years of age in raising stars room at 3.00pm.
- Two staff members cared for eight children aged 3 to 4 years of age and 9 school going children aged 5 to 8 years of age in shining stars room at 3.00pm.

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:

- (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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(j)

The service used an electronic application to maintain a record of temperature reducing medication as administered to children. The record included details of the name of the child, time, amount administered, child's temperature and had provision for signature of a staff member, manager and parent of the child. Permission to administer temperature reducing medication in an emergency was observed to be included on the enrolment forms for the children.

(k)

The inspector reviewed the accident and incident book for the service. Records were reviewed for incidents that occurred on the 30 December 2022, the 7 March 2025 and the 8 August 2025. The records reviewed were observed to include detail of the incident, remedial measures taken, and were signed by a staff member, manager and parent on the day the accident or incident occurred. In conversation with a staff member, it was evident that the staff member was familiar with the procedure to be followed in the event of an accident or incident in the service involving a preschool child. The accident and incident policy for the service was reviewed by the inspector subsequent to the inspection and was observed to be in keeping with the practice outlined by the staff member and documented in the accident and incident record book for the service.

(3)

The records reviewed under (1)(j)(k) were open to inspection by the inspector while in the service.

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)

Children in the three playrooms were observed to be relaxed and moved about freely in the rooms, choosing toys and play equipment to play with. Staff were observed to attend to the care needs of the children and talked to the children using soft tones, referring to the children's individual names and getting down to their level to make eye contact when speaking to the children.

The children were observed to be made aware of routines and daily transitions so that they knew what to expect and could prepare for change. For example, a timer was used in the shining stars room to count down the time half the group were returning to the room from outdoor play so that the remainder of the group could go out to play. The staff member was observed to praise the children for getting ready to go out to play and to distract and encourage a child who was anticipating outdoor play to play with a group of children indoors until the group playing outdoors returned to the room.

Supervised hand washing in the service was observed in the shining stars room after messy play as children were lined up to be taken to the wash hand basins, after nappy changing in the case of a child cared for in the twinkle stars room and before children were served their dinner in the raising stars care room.

The morning break time at 10.10am was an indication of how the staff encouraged the children in the rooms to take a break from activities, relax and sit and engage in leisurely conversation with their friends and the staff in the room. For example the children in the shining Stars room enjoyed pieces of apple, banana and water to drink before outdoor play time, sitting with the staff in the room. Children in the twinkle stars care room were observed sitting at a low level table with the staff member to have crackers and apple pieces and water to drink.

Dinner was served directly in the three playrooms from 12.00pm. A child was observed to be served more pasta from the spaghetti bolognese dinner and another child was provided with more water to drink as requested. In the raising stars room, a staff member sang a “clean up” song with the children to encourage the children to clear the tables and line up for hand washing in preparation for dinner time. In the twinkle stars room, soft music was played during dinner time, staff were observed encouraging the children to sit for dinner and finish eating at their individual pace while other children in the room returned to play with building blocks. A staff member was observed to assist a child with feeding as necessary in the room.

After dinner in the service, children who requiring their nappy to be changed had them changed. Children requiring sleep were accommodated in both the twinkle stars and the raising stars care rooms. The children cared for in the twinkle stars room, slept on sleep mats while the staff member remained in the room supervising the children and recorded their sleep checks. Children who required a sleep from the shining stars room were accommodated in the rising stars room. Two staff members remained with the children in the room during sleep time to assist the children to get to sleep and to monitor the children while sleeping on sleep mats. Childrens shoes were removed and they were observed to sleep in light clothing with light blankets provided as necessary. The room temperatures were recorded as 22°C in the twinkle stars room and between 21.8°C and 22°C in the raising stars room during sleep time.

The children were observed to enjoy free play time in the three playrooms. In the shining stars room, the children were observed playing with toy dinosaurs in a group and sitting at tables using small animals and paint to print foot prints on sheets of paper, while the remainder of the children played with dolls and pushchairs in the home corner. A staff member was observed to praise the children for completing their artwork while hanging the pages up to dry. In the twinkle stars room, the children were observed to enjoy playing with animals and with wooden blocks. The staff member was observed to sit with the children at floor level and show them pictures from the books in the cosy corner of the playroom and to sing with the children while making wooden jigsaws. In the raising stars room, a staff member sat with the children making a “pizza” from moulding clay and engaged in conversation about preferred toppings on pizzas with the children.

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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Toys and play equipment in the playrooms were located at low level for children to see and choose play equipment of their preferred choice. In the twinkle stars room, counters and musical toys were located on the low level deep window cills to permit children to move independently and to practice their co-ordination and balancing skills. Baskets with miniature toys on wheels, wooden pieces to interconnect and blocks to stick together were provided for floor play. In all rooms, a supply of art and crafts materials were provided. Mirrors were located on “emotional walls” and in dress up areas. A variety of jigsaws, puzzles, games and matching cards were provided for tabletop activities. Home corners were provided in the rooms and toys in construction areas. Stands were used in the rooms for children to play in groups with sand, blocks and bricks of different sizes and dimensions and small animals.

(b)

Cosy corners were provided in the three playrooms and a soft low-level couch was provided in the raising stars room.

(2)(a)

The outdoor play area was located at the back and side of the premises and was safely and securely fenced in by high level brightly painted concrete walls and the back wall of the premises. A cast iron gate secured at high level with a latch was provided to prevent unsupervised exit by children when playing in the outdoor area at the side of the premises, leading to the front of the building and adjoining roadway. An all-weather ground surface was provided in the three divided outdoor play areas. Toys provided outdoors included a sand box under an open shelter, toys to sit on which were safely anchored to the ground, a climbing frame, tyres to practice balancing skills, balls for energetic play and a planting area. It was observed that children from the three playrooms were taken outdoors to play on the day of 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:

A high level door release switch was provided on the door leading from the reception area to the rooms in the service to guard against unsupervised exit by children from the service. Visibility strips were provided on the double glass doors leading from the shining stars room to the outdoor play area. High level shelves were provided to store cleaning agents in use in the rooms. The cleaning store room was used to store cleaning equipment and chemicals in the service. The refuse bins for the temporary storage of refuse were kept at the gable end of the premises and in area fenced off from the outdoor play area at the rear of the service.

Infection Control:

A staff member was observed to use appropriate cleaning and hand washing practices after nappy changing in the nappy changing area. Childrens nappies and individual creams were observed to be stored in individually labelled containers in the nappy changing area. Laundered sheets for use on low level beds were stored in individually labelled containers in a storeroom in the service. Completed cleaning checklists were observed in the playrooms. Liquid soap, thermostatically controlled hot water, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins were provided at the washhand basins in the sanitary accommodation and the nappy changing area for hand washing purposes. A pest control contract was available to control vermin in the service. It was noted that a visit was conducted to the service on 8 May 2025.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not administered to the children on the day of inspection. Temperature reducing medication was held in storage in the kitchen in the service. Signed parental consent for the administration of medication in the event of an emergency is included on the childrens enrolment forms for the service. An electronic communications application was used to record the procedures for recording administration of prescribed medication and for securing parental consent for the administration of the medication.

Safe Sleep:

Children slept on individual sleep mats in both twinkle stars and rising stars care rooms on the day of inspection. Staff stayed in the rooms with the children during sleep time and used an electronic application to record 10 minute sleep check observations to include the child's position, colour and sleep patterns.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits in the service were signalled and unobstructed. The fire assembly points in both the back garden and in the carpark at the front of the service were clearly signposted.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting had been obtained for all staff members. However, in relation to one staff member, re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, was not adhered to. This practice was found to be non-compliant on an inspection conducted on 14 February 2024. The preventive action taken was not sustained.
2. The front door access to the service was not secured on the return of the inspector to the service at 1.37pm and when the inspector was leaving the service at 3.39pm. It was noted that the door could be pushed open. This posed a risk of unauthorised access to the service during operational hours.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider advised in the response to the inspection report that the outstanding Garda vetting was applied for without delay. As a preventive measure, the registered provider advised that a meeting was conducted in the service and a system was implemented to ensure that Garda vetting for staff are maintained in date.
2. The registered provider advised that the company that installed the door has been to the service and conducted the necessary repairs to ensure that the door seals on closure. As a preventive measure, the

registered provider advised that signage has been placed on the door to alert families and staff to ensure that the door is secured at all times when entering and leaving the premises.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The CAPA response was received on the 3 October 2025. The outstanding processed Garda vetting for one staff member was submitted to and accepted by the inspectorate on 11 November 2025.

Summary Comment

The inspector reviewed the actions taken and evidence that the registered provider submitted. The non-compliances found on inspection have been adequately addressed.

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)
Two staff members with up to date First Aid Response (FAR) training with expiry dates of the 29 March 2027 in the case of one staff member and 25 April 2027 in the case of the second staff member were available to the children attending the preschool service.

(2) First aid boxes were wall mounted in all playrooms and a first aid box was also provided in the kitchen, which were easily accessible to staff caring for children in attendance 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 fire fighting 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)

The service maintained a record of fire drills as conducted in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on 21 August 2025.

(b)

The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment located in the playrooms, the hallway and the kitchen confirmed that an annual service was conducted on 23 May 2025. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that a service was conducted on 23 July 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was posted in all playrooms in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 69 children in daily attendance in a full day care service.

Insurance cover was valid from 19 March 2025 to 27 March 2026