

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021KY001
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Name of Service:	Bluebells Preschool & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Loreto National School, Scartlea, Muckcross, Killarney, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V93 AY90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Alison Maher, Rosemary Falvey
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	11/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	08
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
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Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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
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Description of service

Bluebells Preschool & Afterschool is registered as a privately operated early years service, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 years. The service offers part-time and sessional care operating between the hours of 9.00 am and 13.50pm. The children attending on inspection were aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years. The sessional care is provided between the 9.00 am and 12.30pm.

The service operates from one spacious playroom in the Loreto National school, in the rural area of Muckross, Killarney, Co. Kerry. The children have access each day to an enclosed outdoor area at alternate times to the children attending the National school. The children have direct access to the sanitary accommodation in the playroom.

Staffing

There are 6 adults attached to the service. This includes the 2 registered providers. There was 1 staff member employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme.

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 inspections 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, 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*

(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 registered providers are the designated persons in charge and there is a named deputy to deputise in their absence as required.
- (b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, 1 registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to each of the 6 adults attached to the service were inspected.
- (a) Of the 12 references required, 11 references with records of validation on file were from previous employers.
- (b) Of the 12 references required, 1 reference with a record of validation on file was from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for each of the 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was on file for 3 adults who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

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.*

(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) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children at all times.

(3) There were 3 staff caring for 16 children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years, 8 children were attending on a part-time basis and 8 children were attending on a sessional basis. There were adequate staff available to the children

(8)(a) The registered providers did ensure there was 2 staff members on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

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;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1) The registered providers did ensure that a record in writing was kept in relation to:

(a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee.

Non-Compliance Information

(i) The details of staff rosters on a daily basis were not recorded. The last recorded attendance record for the staff was 27.2.'26.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff roster has been updated and is completed daily. A reminder notice for the staff to sign in and out each day has been placed on the cover of the roll book.

Supporting documentation submitted

Completed staff rosters and the reminder signage for staff on the front of the roll book.

Summary Comment

The requirement for the regulation has been met.

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, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- All the food consumed on the premise is supplied by the parents of the children attending the service.
- The children that remained in the service on a part-time basis had food for a second snack.
- The children's perishable food items were stored in the fridge in the playroom.
- The children assisted the staff to tidy up the toys before the morning snack.
- Following tidy up, all the children washed their hands under adult supervision.
- The children sat at their tables of choice and prior to getting their lunches, the staff facilitated relaxation time, soft music was played and the lighting was turned off.
- The children had access to their water bottles on a low-level table in the playroom during the session.
- Plenty of time was given to the children to eat their food in a relaxed, unhurried environment.
- The staff members sat with the children, with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults.
- The food observed on inspection included a selection of fruit, yogurts and sandwiches.
- Activities were available for the children who had finished their food before others as observed. Some children went to the 'cosy corner' and choose books to read from the book rack, with other sitting with a staff member who read a story to them.
- The children were observed to have unrestricted access to the toilets in the playroom with the staff encouraging and supporting them.

- The inspector observed staff promptly responded to children’s requests to use the toilet inside, accompanying them from the outdoor play area.
- The staff members were kind and caring towards the children in their care.
- The staff communicated freely with each other, for example when leaving the outdoor area to accompany children inside to the toilet and when children were going home from the outdoor play area.
- The ‘cosy area’ was located in the corner of the playroom. It consisted of a selection of low-level seating and couches, a small table and a resourced book display with a selection of string lighting. In addition, there was a large soft couch adjacent to the area for children’s use.
- The inspector observed the children had free movement between the various resourced interest areas in the room, for example, tuff trays with lentils and small vehicles, a filled large water table with various toys and utensils, the home area and the book area.
- There was a supply of protective aprons provided for the children’s messy play activities.
- The toys and play materials were accessible to the children on the floor, on low level open shelving to encourage and facilitate children independently accessing them as they wanted to during the session.
- During the course of the inspection, the children played in the designated outdoor area.
- In the outdoor play area, the children had the use of a selection of ride on toys, mud kitchens with accessories, a playhouse, number and alphabet displays on the tarmac surface for example.
- The inspector was informed that a garden area adjacent to the area in use currently will be developed and children will have the use of the area at alternate times to the children attending the National school.
- The staff working with the children were kind and caring towards the children.

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:

- Cleaning products were stored out of the reach of the children.
- The first aid bag was stored in a secured, clearly labelled cupboard in the playroom.

Infection Control:

- The children were observed to wash their hands prior to the morning snack and after using the toilet.

Fire Safety:

- The fire procedures notice was displayed near the entrance/exit door in the playroom.

- The inspector was furnished with the records of the fire drill carried out in the service demonstrating that the drills were conducted on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- There was a dangling cable attached to a copier in the playroom that was accessible to the children posing a risk of injury.
- There was a timber splinter exposed on the one side of the large sand pit in the outdoor area posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

- The 2 low level vinyl single chairs in the 'cosy corner' were showing signs of wear and tear impacting the ability to adequately clean the surfaces posing a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The shelf for the bags has been moved closer to the fridge which closes the gap between the shelf and the fridge and covers any exposed wire. A sign has been placed on the photocopier as a reminder to ensure that cables are not left exposed.
- The broken timber boards have been replaced on the outdoor sand box.

Infection Control:

- The 2 armchairs have been removed from the room.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A photograph showing the cable attached to the inner corner of the photocopier located in between the narrow space of the fridge and the shelving unit.
- Photographs demonstrating the timber sandbox intact.

Infection Control:

- A photograph of the cosy corner with low level seating in place, without the 2 low level chairs in question.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did ensure that that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee with an allocated book to record same.

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 staff members working in the service had current certified First Aid Responder certificates (FAR).

- (2)
- (a) The sufficiently equipped first aid bag was stored in a clearly labelled secure cupboard in the playroom, out of reach of children.
 - (b) At all times when the service is in operation, the first aid bag was accessible to the adults in the event that children required the first aid supplies.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a)
Visibly the premise appeared to be sound and stable.
- (b)
- The entrance door to the service was secure to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorized persons enter the premise.
 - The internal door to the National school was secured with a high-level closure.
- (e)
- There were 2 partitioned toilet cubicles and 2 wash hand basins supplied with thermostatically controlled warm water.
 - The temperature of the warm water at the wash hand basins was recorded below the maximum temperature of 43 degrees Celsius.