

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021TY001
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Name of Service:	Ladybirds CBS Preschool and Afterschool Service
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Address of Service:	St Joseph's C.B.S Nenagh, Summerhill, Nenagh Ladybirds Childcare Limited, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45 F890
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Name of Registered Provider:	Stephanie Kennedy
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45 A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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
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Description of service

This part-time service was established in 2021 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school age care service is also provided. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 2pm for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session from 9am to 12pm which is funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is located in the grounds of the CBS primary and secondary school in the town of Nenagh in north Tipperary. The premises is a detached, modular building with two rooms and sanitary accommodation. The children have access to their own enclosed playground in front of the premises as well as the school grounds and ball courts for outdoor play.

This is a sister service to Ladybirds Pre-school and Childcare Centre in Carrig Rua, Nenagh and Ladybirds Pre-school Newtown.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service but is available to call on if required. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are three staff, including the manager, employed to work with the children on a daily basis. Two staff were working with the children on the day of the inspection. A childcare student, in third year of a level 8 degree in early childhood care and education, was also present on work experience. Relief staff are taken from the other Ladybirds services if required. Additional staff are employed to work in the school age care service in the afternoon and to assist with ancillary duties in the morning.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 16, 19(1)(b), 23, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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-

(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

The files of five members of staff, including the childcare student, were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of the five members of staff.

(b) A written, validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of one member of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant records were maintained on file. The service had a system in place to ensure that staff were re-vetted on a three-yearly basis.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

(4) Staff employed to work directly with the pre-school children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at level 5 or 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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 were 2 staff working directly with 18 children aged between 2 years 10 months and 5 years old attending the ECCE session on the morning of the inspection. Of these, 6 children attended for the session only while 12 children attended on a part-time basis. After 12pm, there were 2 staff working with 12 children who attended on a part-time basis.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements throughout the inspection. The childcare student and a member of the school age care staff who were present in the service were not included in the adult to child ratios.

(4) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the required ratios throughout the inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service while it was in 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;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (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, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The records required to be maintained in writing by the service were available as follows:

- (a) This information was maintained in individual staff files.
- (b) – (e) This information was contained in the mission statement of the service.
- (f) This information was in the registration pack given to parents when enrolling their child in the service.
- (g) The policies and procedures for the service were printed and available in folders in the entrance lobby of the service.

- (h) Child attendance records were available in printed and electronic formats.
 - (i) Staff rosters were recorded in the staff sign-in book.
 - (j) Medication forms were available to record any medications administered to a child while attending the service with signed parental consent.
 - (k) Accident and incident forms were available to record any accidents or incidents that occurred in the service.
- (3) The records were available and open for inspection by an authorised person. Records that were kept off the premises for security purposes were brought to the service when required for 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

The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The staff supported and encouraged the children to be independent with self-care skills. For example, the staff taught the children how to put on their coats using the 'up and over' method and some children were able to zip up their coats themselves. Tissues and wet wipes were available to the children so they could wipe their noses and faces when they needed to.

The staff supervised the children when they washed their hands and gave assistance when needed.

Children had individual cubby holes in the unit in the entrance lobby where they stored their bags, coats and spare clothes. The children accessed their belongings when they wanted them and put them back again when not using them.

The staff and children sat together at mealtimes which were relaxed and chatty occasions. In the morning, boxes of breakfast cereal, milk, fruit and bowls were available on a table in the room where the children could serve themselves if they were hungry. Before lunchtime the children helped with the tidying up, washed their hands,

got their lunch boxes and drink bottles and sat down with their friends and staff at one of the three tables. There was an adult at each table to supervise and help them if needed.

The children enjoyed a balance between indoor and outdoor play times. On the morning of the inspection the children were outside before lunch and again after lunch.

The staff were observed to be flexible in responding to the children's interests in the moment. For example, the planned craft activity was put off until later when the children wanted to play in the sensory area instead.

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

The following was observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

General safety:

The three access doors to the service were kept secured while the service was in operation. Entry to and exit from the service was managed by the staff to prevent unauthorised access to the service and to prevent a child from leaving the service unsupervised.

The children and staff were observed to practice road safety when crossing the service road that ran through the school grounds.

Hot water for hand washing was heated by electric water heaters that were thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C.

The cords of the window blinds were secured to the window frames with safety devices.

The staff had risk assessed the playground as being too slippery to use currently due to the ground surface being muddy and were using the school ball courts and sensory garden for outdoor play instead.

Infection control:

The staff and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before eating, before preparing food, after using the toilet or a tissue, after nappy changing and after outdoor play.

The service had a policy to support the prevention of the spread of infection in the service as well as a cleaning policy and hand washing policy.

The staff were observed to practice 'clean as you go', in particular with regard to floors and table tops.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of the inspection.

Fire safety:

The fire escape routes and doors were kept clear of obstruction.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children. Daily attendance was recorded in three formats: electronically on an application designed for use in early years services, in the attendance register book and on a daily record sheet.

(3)(a) Staff met all visitors to the service at the entrance door before allowing them entry to the service if appropriate.

(b) A written record was maintained of all visitors to the service.

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) The service manager held current certification in first aid responder (FAR) valid until 9 November 2026. A second member of staff held current certification in paediatric first aid.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid cabinet mounted to the wall in the main activity room and a portable first aid box.

(b) The first aid supplies were available if required by a child attending 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 firefighting 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) There was a written record of the weekly fire drills that took place in the service.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced on an annual basis.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in each room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for up to 22 children attending on a part-time basis and up to 40 school age children, valid until 27 March 2025.