

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2021WW002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Explorers Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 20 Charlesland Centre, Greystones, Co. Wicklow
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A63 ET02
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Gina McGarry
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	17/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	9	PM	No.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Mulhern
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Little Explorers Childcare is one of four early years services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to provide a morning sessional service for a maximum of 22 children aged 2-6 years. It is located on the second floor of a commercial premises in Greystones, Co. Wicklow. The children are accommodated in one section of a large room which has been divided into two areas. The second area accommodates school-aged children in the afternoon. There are sanitary facilities for the children adjacent to the room and an outdoor area is located behind the commercial premises.

### Staffing

There are five staff members employed to work directly with the pre-school children including the service manager. All five adults were working directly with the children on the day of the inspection. The company's support manager and senior manager were also present during the inspection.

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the managers, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a designated person to deputise.
  - (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge to be present at all times of opening.
- (2) The registered provider ensured the staff were suitable and competent as outlined below. The inspection focused on the records for five staff members, two managers and a cook who is sometimes present in the service at the same time as the pre-school children to prepare food for the school-aged children.
- (a) & (b) Appropriate consideration was given to references for all staff. References had been sourced from past employers and from another source where adults had only one previous employer. All references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting had been sourced for one adult for whom it was required.

(4) All staff employed to work directly with children and the two managers held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education between Level 5 and 8 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.*

*(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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children at all times. There were five adults working directly with nine children aged 3-5 years.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were a minimum of two staff on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be present at all times of opening.

### 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

##### Basic Needs

Children moved freely throughout the inspection. They brought lunches from home and ate these, seated together with the adults. The adults engaged the children in conversation and provided help when needed. Children were afforded plenty of time to eat, with an adult remaining seated with one child who was still eating when the other children had finished. Drinks were always available within the room, visible and accessible to the children. The staff brought the drinks to the outdoor area when the children went outside to play.

Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times and use the toilet independently when they needed. They promptly helped a child to change clothes when these became wet from water play. Transitions between activities and care routines were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next.

##### Supporting Relationships around Children

The adults were attentive to the children and always engaged warmly with them. They addressed them by name and were affectionate and responsive. Group activities such as shared meals and cooperative play were observed which can develop communication skills, strengthen social bonds and help children build friendships. The children were regularly observed laughing and engaging in conversations with the adults and each other during play and activities. Pictures of the children's families were displayed on the wall at children's eye level. Staff communicated with children's guardians/parents at drop off and collection and discussed maintaining relationships with families to support children's emotional and social development.

##### Physical and Material Environment

The indoor area was spacious and laid out with designated interest areas including home corners, construction areas and an arts and crafts area. These were resourced with props and equipment to support creative and

imaginative play and learning. All play equipment and materials were visible and accessible to the children and included small world toys and puzzles. Children engaged freely with the environment and participated in activities of their choice, including craft making, sand play, water play and foam play.

A large area with a bed, sofa and armchairs was available where children could rest and take a break from activities. Many of the children spent time in this area chatting and reading books. The children played in the outdoor area after lunch. This was equipped with swings and the staff brought out scooters, hula hoops and a ball for the children to play with.

### 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:

Appropriate measures were taken to ensure the children's safety. This included securing the entrance and exits to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Toys and equipment were in good working order. Cleaning products and cables were stored out of children's reach. Emergency exits were kept clear to facilitate a timely evacuation in the event of a fire. Records were available demonstrating fire drills were carried out monthly and staff were familiar with the service's fire evacuation procedures.

##### Infection Control:

The premises, materials and equipment appeared clean and well maintained. Documented up to date cleaning schedules were in place and included laundering of fabric items. The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped to support handwashing. The inspector observed children washing their hands before eating, after messy play and after using the toilet to prevent the spread of infection. Facial tissues were available for children to clean their noses if needed. Waste was properly managed using pedal-operated bins, to facilitate hands-free disposal.

##### Administration of Medication:

The staff reported that no child has been given medication while attending the service. A medication administration policy was available to guide practice should a child require medicine. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the documented procedures to administer medicine safely if required. This included obtaining written parent/guardian consent and keeping a detailed record.

### 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) A person trained in first aid for children was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person trained in first aid to be available to the children at all times of opening.

(2) (a) & (b) An appropriately equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position in the pre-school room. The staff brought a first aid kit to the outdoor area when the children played outside.

### 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) A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 12 May 2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the firefighting equipment and smoke detection system. The most recent dates of maintenance recorded were January 2025 and 9 June 2025 respectively.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a prominent position.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The children were appropriately supervised at all times during the inspection. This included walking to and playing in the outdoor area which was located behind the commercial premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had an insurance certificate valid from 26 March 2025 to 25 March 2026.