

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023TY001
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Name of Service:	Little Loughmore Childcare
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Address of Service:	Loughmore National School, Loughmore, Templemore, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 NN12
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rosaleen Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary E45A099
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 full day care service was established in 2023 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, 7am – 6pm for 48 weeks of the year. This includes a daily 3-hour sessional service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a single-storey, detached premises at the back of Loughmore National School in north Tipperary that was purpose-built in 2023. The premises consists of a large activity room, kitchen and sanitary accommodation areas. There is an enclosed outdoor play area directly accessible from the activity room, for the exclusive use of children attending the service. In addition, the children have access to the school grounds, school hall and newly constructed outdoor classroom when not in use by the school children.

This is one of four services operated by the registered provider located in north Tipperary and Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but is available to call on when required and was present for the end of the inspection. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are four staff employed in the service, including the person in charge. All staff work directly with the children and hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 15(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 20(1)(2), 22, 24(1)(3), 25(1)(2), 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child

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 service manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named person who could deputise when required.

(b) The person in charge or a named deputy were present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that of the four staff employed in the service, two staff members were employed at the time of the previous inspection in September 2023. All four staff files and that of the registered provider were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working in the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting documentation was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6 or 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.

(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 3 staff working directly with 17 children aged between 2 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There were 3 staff working directly with 13 children in the afternoon.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the requirements throughout the inspection, including during times when staff were required to carry out duties such as nappy changing and cooking.
- (4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at all times.
- (8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service while it was in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

- (1) *A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*
- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
 - (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
 - (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
 - (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
 - (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
 - (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
 - (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
 - (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
 - (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*
- (3) *A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample size of 12 registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection. The forms contained the information required as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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

The children were reminded to wash their hands after using the toilet and before eating. Staff supervised the children during hand washing and helped them when needed.

Staff sat with the children at mealtimes, during activities and when they needed comforting. They were present, engaged and available to the children to support their play and interactions, help resolve any issues such as toy sharing or turn taking and to model respectful behaviour for the children.

The service had developed an area of the wall inside the entrance door to the activity room as an 'Attendance Wall' where the children's photos and their first name were displayed under the words 'Who is in school today?'. This acted as a self check-in attendance record for the children to engage with.

Staff used an effective method of getting the children's attention before giving them instructions for the next transition. The staff member said 'Hey everybody, can you touch your head? Can you touch your toes? The children responded by stopping what they were doing, touching their hands to their heads and then their toes, then listening to what came next.

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 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) The children had access to a large, bright and comfortable activity room as well as daily access to outdoor play. The room was well resourced and laid out in a number of well-defined interest areas including the home corner, library and relaxation area, table-top activities area, small world areas and art area.

(b) There were camp beds available for the children who required a sleep during the day. On the day of inspection three children slept after lunch time. An area of the room was sectioned off using furniture and mobile barriers so that the children would not be disturbed by other children. Sleep beds with individual sheets and blankets were laid out in this area and each child's comfort toy was placed on their bed for them to use. There were also two areas where children could rest during the day, both areas had large, padded vinyl covered floor mats for the children to sit on.

(2)(a) The children had access to an enclosed outdoor play area directly accessible from the activity room. This space had a tarmac surface and was equipped with ride-on toys, push toys, balls, seating areas and play house. The children also had access to the school grounds and outdoor classroom when not in use by the school children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy and a three-week rolling menu plan. The Week 2 menu was being used on the day of inspection. All of the menu plans were displayed on the noticeboard in the entrance lobby. During term time children brought a packed lunch to eat at the morning snack time around 10am. All other meals were supplied by the service and during school holiday periods the 10am snack is also supplied by the service. The daily menu includes breakfast at 8am, snack at 10am, lunch at 12pm, dinner at 2pm and supper/tea at 4pm. Lunch on the day of inspection was grated cheese, crackers and mandarin segments. Each child was served an individual plate with the meal attractively presented on it. Children were offered a drink of milk or water with their meal. Staff were aware of the children on special diets or who had allergies and supported them by the provision of their required nutritional supplements and safe alternatives to the standard meals. The children had individual drink bottles which they could access when they wanted a drink between meal times. Drink bottles were stored on two mobile trolleys in the play area for easy access.

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) Staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children. They used an attendance register for this purpose.

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

(b) A written record was maintained of any 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 registered provider, person in charge and another member of staff held current certification as first aid responders (FAR) valid until April 2027.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box on a wall-mounted hook in the entrance lobby where it could be easily accessed when required.

(B) The first aid box was available if required by a child while 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 monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 21 October 2025.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment, which was serviced annually, most recently on 27 June 2025. There was a written record of the installation, commissioning and servicing of the smoke alarm system. The smoke alarms were serviced quarterly, most recently on 16 October 2025.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed on the wall above the fire extinguishers.

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 a full day care service valid until 27 March 2026.