

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024CC006
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Name of Service:	Darling Buds Preschool
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Address of Service:	Scoil Bhride, Ashlin Road, Townparks, Midleton, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P25 R248
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Ward
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	05/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	Ms. O'Reilly
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

Darling Buds Preschool is a newly established early years service that first opened in September 2024. It is a privately owned service, that provides part time and sessional care. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 44 children aged 2 to 6 years. The service currently caters for children from the age of 2 years 8 months to 6 years and for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Daily opening hours are from 09:00 to 14:00 hours each day Monday to Friday. The service operates from two designated classrooms located on the ground floor of Scoil Bhríde, Primary School, located in the outskirts of Midleton town in Co Cork. The two spacious classrooms have been suitably converted into two spacious early years service playrooms. The service has access to an outdoor area beside the service, which is located within the grounds of the primary school. There were adequate designated children's toilets and a nappy changing facility. The adults have access to a staff toilet within the primary school building.

Staffing

There were 4 staff employed to work directly with the early years children including the named registered provider/the person in charge in the service. There was 1 of the 4 staff employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. There was 1 of the 4 staff appointed to cover holiday and sick leave cover. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification 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 announced 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.

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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 4 staff members who had commenced employment in the service in September 2024. The following records were available for the four adults:

(a) Of the required 8 references, 7 references were from previous employers with records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 1 reference was from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A police vetting record was on file for the one staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 4 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in each room on day of the inspection.

(2)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the playroom in operation.

Glitter Bugs Room

There were 11 children present in the morning and 6 children were present in the afternoon attending the part time service with 3 adults in attendance at all times.

Jumping Jellybeans Room

Not in operation at time of inspection

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 12 of the 18 children's registration forms were reviewed and found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.
- (i) A weekly staff roster was maintained in the service. The staff roster indicated the names of the staff, the arrival and departure times and the time they went on break each day.
- (k) There was a hard copy Accident and Incident record book in the service. The registered provider informed the inspectorate there was no accidents or incident to report since the service opened in September 2024.

The Accident and Incident template included once signed, a duplicate copy of each accident and incident record for the parent /guardian.

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

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. Self-toileting by the children was encouraged. The staff members were observed to assist where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating and post toileting.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting. Staff helped children to recognise and understand the rules for being together as seen on day of inspection when children were observed practising the songs for the Christmas concert, that the children will perform in front of parents and families before Christmas. The children were observed waiting their turn, sharing the experience and the activity fostered the children's confidence in completing a group task together. The children's language skills, emotional, cognitive and social skills were all enhanced in preparing and participating for this concert.
- The adults were observed to demonstrate patience and kindness in their interactions with the children, as was noted when the children's efforts were readily acknowledged and when children were calmly assisted to resolve minor conflicts.
- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.

- The person in charge informed the inspectorate that there was an online application used to share information weekly with parents and guardians regarding the theme, associated play activities, songs and stories completed. Phone calls, a messaging application and informal face to face discussion at arrival and collection times, were also incorporated.
- The programme of care in place in the service was observed to be play based and child led in approach. A record of each child's emerging interests had commenced.

Physical and Material Environment

- The spacious care room afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as painting, imaginary play and tabletop activities.
- The playroom was adequately resourced with a variety of play materials that were accessible to the children on low level shelving units, providing the children with choice in their chosen activities.
- The playroom had a designated cosy area for children to rest and relax as required. There was a wall mounted book rack, home corner, and a fine motor skills area. The room was furnished with sufficient child sized tables and chairs.
- There was an outdoor play area provided beside the premise located within the grounds of the primary school. The outdoor play area had a combination of an all-weather and cement surface. Due to the inclement weather, there was no outdoor play area on day of inspection. The children have access to the outdoor play area in rotation with the children attending the national school.

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 children's parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.
- Lunches were stored in snack boxes and stored in the service fridge.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- The service provided crockery and cutlery.

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:

- Since the Fit for Purpose Inspection, the service now have their own independent entrance door within the primary school building. On the inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use. The service also has their own door within the school to access when going to and from the outdoor play area.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the children.
- Restrictive opening devices were in place on the low-level cupboards located under the sink in the playroom.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- Emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed in the school corridor beside the service.
- Water temperatures at the wash hand basins were thermostatically controlled, so as not to exceed 43°C. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets and nappy changing areas were 29°C on day of inspection.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playroom in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with the main school building on three sides and a strong plastic barrier that is attached to the wall at either side when the children are playing outdoors.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom, toilets and nappy changing facilities. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were in place.
- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack and after toileting
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available.
- Tables were observed to be sanitised after snack time.
- The children's coats and bags were appropriately stored on wall hooks, above floor level.

Safe Sleep:

- There were individual padded floor mats, fitted sheets and single blankets for the children attending part time that wanted to sleep. None of the children required a sleep on day of inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

- The registered provider ensured the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 44 children until 27/03/2025. The records detailed the category of service covered which was part time and sessional care, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.