

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025GY001
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Hundred Acre Wood Preschool
-------------------------	-----------------------------

Address of Service:	The Square, Eyrecourt, Co. Galway
----------------------------	-----------------------------------

Eircode:	H53 R772
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Louise Amy Kileen Caulfield
-------------------------------------	-----------------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	06/01/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	3	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Clinical and Administration Building, Block A (First Floor Green Corridor), Merlin Park University Hospital. Galway. H91 ER2D
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Hundred Acre Wood Preschool is a private sessional service in operation since 2025. The hours of operation are from 09.00 to 12.00, Monday to Friday, school term time only. The service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years. Children currently attending are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years.

Hundred Acre Wood Preschool operates from a classroom located at the rear of St. Brendan's National School in the rural village of Eyrecourt in east county Galway. There are two children's toilets located off the main care room and an adult toilet is located within the school building. The children have access to a large shared outdoor play area at the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider operates the service singlehandedly. Two adults are available nearby in the event of an emergency.

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 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 registered provider 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.*

(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 register provider was the designated person in charge who operates the service singlehandedly.
 - (b) The registered provider was observed working with the pre-school children who were present in the service.
- (2) Recruitment files of the three adults were reviewed:
- (a) Three of the six required validated references were from previous employers.
 - (b) The remaining three validated references were from sources other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the three adults which evidenced compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Records available indicated that no overseas police vetting was required for any of the adults.
- (4) Documentary evidence available confirmed that the three adults had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above 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)-*
- (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult/child ratios were met. There was one adult working directly with three children during the sessional

hours of the service.

(8) The registered provider ensured that a second person familiar with the operation of the service was available, if required.

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 in line with the service's healthy eating policy. Children were observed eating nutritious food at 11:10 which had been prepared by the parents/guardians. Examples included filled sandwiches, bite sized pieces of fruit, vegetables and yogurt.
- The adult sat with the children encouraging and extending conversation by asking questions and commenting on the children's responses. The children were engaged in a theme related activity while eating and the atmosphere was noted to be happy and relaxed.
- Water was easily accessible from individual water bottles which were available during the session.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently. The adult was on hand to provide reminders to wash and dry their hands hygienically.
- Steps up were available to facilitate the children to reach the toilet bowls encouraging independence.
- A cosy rest/quiet area was in use and children were observed in this area listening to a story during the morning. The area was furnished with a variety of cushions, soft plush toys and a large blue rug underfoot. A variety of age and stage appropriate books were displayed on nearby shelving.

Supporting children's relationships:

- Transition strategies were in place enabling the children to anticipate and prepare themselves for transitions. These included a clean-up song preparing children for a change in their routine, ensuring a smooth shift between activities.
- Communication with parents/guardians was stated as being mainly verbally at drop off and pick up, as observed on the day, by phone, email and on a social media group. The adult stated that daily information includes photographs of the activities the children had taken part in.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by staff, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement.

Physical and material environment:

- The walls of the care room were decorated with visual charts, pictorial school rules, colours, letters, numbers, emotions and artwork. These were displayed in a visually appealing way with colourful borders and with labelling which described each area on display.
- The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas with equipment and toys providing play and learning opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. The position of the furniture enabled the adult to easily supervise the children as each area could be easily viewed from any angle of the care room.
- Fine motor development skills were supported with the use of pegs and boards, scissors and pencils which were in use in a pre-writing theme related activity. Gross motor development was supported with the provision of a slide, climbing walls, two bouncy horses and a walking beam in the outdoor play area.
- Children were observed carrying out activities throughout the morning on suitable age-appropriate tables and chairs. Adult chairs were also available in the care room for the adult caring for the children.

Programme of activities:

- Detailed long, medium- and short-term curriculum plans were available on the walls of the service. Theme related activities were devised for all areas of development. Examples included a story of the "Stickman" with stickmen characters mentioned in the story, making stickmen from sticks and pipe cleaners as an arts and craft activity and a digital story increasing the children's engagement and motivation were seen and heard throughout the morning.

- Scrapbooks belonging to each child, which had been documented by the adult, were available for the children to view in the care room. These documented the children’s individual interests and emergent curriculum throughout their time in the service providing a holistic picture of each individual child. The observations of the children were noted to be signed by the parents. The adult stated the scrap books are sent home monthly for the parents/guardians to view. Examples included photographs, artwork, themed activity materials and observations linked to both national frameworks.
- Activities were child led and children had the opportunity to express their views, take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities throughout the morning.
- Children’s language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed throughout the morning.

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:

- The main entrance and care room door were secured upon arrival. The main entrance at the rear of the service was operated by a ring camera which activated when pressed alerting the registered provider that someone wished to gain access. These safety measures ensure that no unauthorised adult can enter the service and that no child can leave unsupervised.
- Window handles were placed out of reach of the children ensuring that no child could exit.
- Toys and equipment in both the indoor and outdoor areas appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Children’s bags and coats were stored on hooks preventing the walkway from becoming blocked.
- Electrical cords and flexes were secured and were inaccessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children and the cupboard under the sink in the main care room was secured.

- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with high block and stone walls. A gate into a nearby pitch was secured to prevent access and gates were secured with sliding bolts preventing the children from leaving the area.

Infection Control:

- The two wash hand basins in the children's sanitary were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water which were recorded at 29.8 °C and 30.6°C respectively. Dispensing soap and paper towels were in use and pedal operated bins were available for the hygienic disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed throughout the morning before and after food and after toileting and messy activities.
- Perishable food was noted to be stored in the fridge. The children were observed removing their food from the fridge for snack time.
- The daily cleaning checklist was completed and up to date indicating that all areas were kept clean.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medications, stored in their original container and inaccessible by the children, were stored out of reach of the children. The dates recorded were between 08/26 and 05/28.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on the morning of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Firefighting equipment was observed to be secured by brackets to the walls in the school building.
- All fire doors were unobstructed.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor play area, a safe distance from the service.
- The smoke alarm certificate was dated 09/09/2025.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that no outings currently take place.