

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025KE005
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Name of Service:	The Learning Tree Early Education Limited
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Address of Service:	Creche at Abbotfield, Abbotfield, Clane, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 DVT8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mateusz Cina
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and R Brien
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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.
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Description of service

The Learning Tree Early Education Ltd. is a purpose built creche facility located in a residential area of Clane, Co Kildare. The service is a privately owned service operated by the registered provider. The premises is purposely built and consists of six care rooms, a cot room, sanitary accommodation, kitchen, office and a staff room. On the day of inspection 3 care rooms were open, the Magnolia room which catered for children aged 2 years, the Cedar room which catered for children aged 3-5 years and the Maple Tree room for children who were aged 1 year. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the building. The service is registered to operate from 7.30am to 5.30pm and an ECCE (Early Childcare Care and Education scheme) session is operated from 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were seven staff present including a manager and person in charge. There was an additional staff member available to help in care rooms when required. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

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 and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 – Staffing levels

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was found under Regulation 8, Notification of change in circumstances. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 inspectors wish 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

(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 person in charge and a named deputy in place.

(b)

The roster demonstrated that at all times the person in charge or deputy were on the premises.

(2)

The inspection focussed on the recruitment records of all staff members.

(a)

There were 13 validated references available from a past employer in respect of seven staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults in the service.

(d) International Police vetting was available for five adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months.

(4)
Three staff members had a qualification at a minimum level 6 in Early childhood Care and Education. Four adults had a received a letter of qualification recognition from the Minister deemed to meet the requirements of this regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

A second reference for one adult was not accepted as it was not from a past employer or a reputable source.

(d)
International Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

The document was provided by the employees the following day. The manager uses a checklist of required documents, and both documents are included on the checklist.

(d)
The document was provided by the employees the following day. The manager uses a checklist of required documents, and both documents are included on the checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) A copy of an additional reference was submitted.

(4) A copy of the international Police vetting was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the documents submitted were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 9.

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.

(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 directly with the pre-school children throughout the inspection.

(2)

The minimum adult to child ratios were maintained at all times throughout the inspection.

(8)(a)

The roster demonstrated that there were two people on the premises at all times.

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

(1)(a) Drinking water was always available to the children, in the care room rooms. Parents provided a morning snack for the children and this included fruit, crackers, yoghurt and sandwiches. Staff were observed to sit with the children during snack time, engaging in conversation and assisting younger children when required. Children were encouraged to look after themselves according to their age and stages of development. Staff supported children to develop independence with opening snack items, using the toilet, washing their hands and taking care of their belongings. Children's faces and hands were washed after meals and when dirty. Children's rest areas were available in the care rooms, there was soft matting and cushions available. The children were able to move freely around the care rooms and engage in different types of activities of their choosing. Staff read stories to children encouraging language development. Adults were observed to be kind and warm to the children and minor disagreements between children were managed promptly by distraction and positive behaviour methods. The adults demonstrated positive regard for the children by using gentle tones when communicating and showing a keen interest in them engaging in conversation during the inspection. The adults supported children during group and individual play activities. Staff communicated with parents at drop off and collection times. The care rooms were a supportive learning environment for the children. The care rooms were bright and had materials including a kitchen, construction materials and a quiet corner incorporating a book area. Children's artwork and large educational posters were displayed on the wall. All the play resources were visible and accessible to the children at their height. Toys were clean, in good repair and included a range of materials including wood, paints, and moulded plastics. There was an enclosed outdoor area available to the children. An artificial grass surface with climbing structure and swings, blocks, sand play and a slide were available. The children from the Cedar room accessed the outdoor area on the day of the inspection and were all dressed appropriately to the weather.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The environment in the Cedar room was not appropriately resourced to promote all areas of development and to provide enriching play experiences for the number of children in attendance as follows;

The environment in the Cedar room did not support the children in initiating and sustaining play activities. The room did not adequately meet the needs of the five children present due to a lack of clearly defined interest areas and a lack of available play materials to support the learning and development of children in the room. For example, the supporting play materials for the toy kitchen were stored on a shelving unit away from the kitchen. There was five books available to the seven number of children in the room on the busiest day, however these books were suitable for a younger age group.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection, we carried out a full review of the environment in the Cedar Room to ensure that it adequately supports children's learning, development, and ability to initiate and sustain play activities. Several improvements have been implemented to better organise the room and provide a wider range of developmentally appropriate resources. The room has been reorganised into clearly defined interest areas to support different types of play and learning. The reading and cosy area has been enhanced with comfortable seating including bean bags, pillows, and soft furnishings to create a welcoming and relaxing space for children. The book corner has been significantly expanded with a wide selection of age-appropriate books covering different story types to support language development, engagement during circle time, and children's understanding of the world around them.

Overall, these improvements ensure the environment now provides a well-resourced, engaging and developmentally appropriate space that supports children in initiating and sustaining play and learning experiences.

Going forward, management will continue to supervise and support educators to ensure that rooms remain appropriately resourced and organised. Regular checks of room environments will be carried out to ensure that sufficient age-appropriate materials are available and that learning areas remain clearly defined and accessible to children.

This will help ensure that all rooms consistently meet the requirements for providing enriching play experiences and supporting children in initiating and sustaining play activities.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photo's of newly purchased materials and interest areas.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the documents submitted were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 19.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

(3) Where a registered provider has been unable for good and proper reason to notify the Agency within the time specified in paragraph (1) or (2), as the case may be, of a change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2), the registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing of the change as soon as possible thereafter.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(3)

The roster demonstrated that the service was open from 7.30am to 7pm, Monday to Friday. The manager and person in charge confirmed that these were the times of operation. The service is registered to open from 7.30am to 5.30pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We submitted the CIC form on the Tusla Portal, which has already been accepted. Management has been informed about the requirement to submit any changes through the CIC form.

Supporting documentation submitted

Confirmation of change in circumstances submitted.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the documents submitted were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 8.