

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025TY002
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Jollytots Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Kevins National School, Littleton, Thurles, Co Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 VW24
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Michelle Callanan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	5	PM	1
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary E45A099
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
<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

This part-time early years service was established in 2025 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, 8.30am – 1.30pm, for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a room in St Kevin’s National School in Littleton in north Tipperary. The children have access to their room, sanitary accommodation areas and a dedicated outdoor play area. The children also benefit from access to the school facilities which include a sensory room, school hall for physical play, the school grounds for a wider range of outdoor activities, the occupational therapy room in the ASD unit and the new playground attached to the ASD unit.

### Staffing

The registered provider works with the children in the service each day with the assistance of at least one other member of staff in the morning and in the afternoon. There are currently three staff employed in the service including the registered provider. On the day of inspection there were two third level students on work placement 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/ 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), 19(1)(a) and 23.

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, 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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who could deputise in her absence.

(b) The registered provider or her deputy were present in the service 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 three staff and two students working in the service all had commenced working in the service since it opened in September 2025. All five staff files 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.

(d) Police vetting documentation was available in respect of the staff member who had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 and 6 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).*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) There were five children aged between 3 to 5 years old being supervised by two staff on the day of the inspection. There were also two third level students present and working with the children in a supernumerary capacity.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11 in the morning and 1:8 in the afternoon.
- (4) The required adult to child ratios were maintained throughout the day.

### 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) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, discussions with staff and review of records:

#### Basic needs

The children enjoyed freedom of movement and freedom of choice throughout the session. The children were observed moving around the room to engage in activities of interest. The children were brought to the school hall, located beside the pre-school room, for games, running, balancing and rolling on peanut rolls after lunch time.

The children had their own drink bottles which they could access throughout the day when they wanted a drink. There was a tap at the sink in the room with drinking water that was used to refill the bottles when they were empty. Children brought a packed lunch to eat during the day. The service kept a supply of foods such as bread for toasting, crackers, fruit and yoghurts to supplement the foods brought by the children.

Children and staff sat together at the tables in the room for meals and snacks. The children could eat when they were hungry and not just at set mealtimes. Staff sat with and supported each child while they were eating. The children could rest and relax in the cosy corner beside the library, in the blackout tent or in the cubby created in the store cupboard. The children had the freedom to choose the spaces they wanted to relax in away from the general play area.

The staff supported the children to become independent with self-care skills such as washing their hands, using the toilet, opening and closing their bags and food containers, putting coats and shoes on for outdoor play or home time. Staff continued to help the children and guide them through these tasks while they were learning these new skills.

The children's sanitary accommodation area was directly accessible from the pre-school room which supported the children to access it independently when needed. Children who were not yet toilet trained had their nappies changed as often as needed.

#### Supporting relationships

The children benefitted from being cared for in a small group with very favourable adult to child ratios. This ensured that each child received as much individual attention and support as they required. It allowed the staff to be flexible about plans and routines and to respond promptly to the child's needs. For example, when a child

wanted to go to the ball pool in the occupational therapy room there were sufficient staff to allow one staff member to go with the child at the time they wanted to go.

Staff were observed to be attuned to the children, their needs and their interests. Staff had created play resources and activities that appealed to the children's current interests and kept them engaged in active learning, for example, matching games that encouraged language development through repeating words and sounds.

Staff discussed their desire to help the children, especially with processes that they found difficult, such as transitions. The staff had introduced several methods to support the children with transitions such as moving from freeplay time to tidy up time and preparation for meals or home time. Resources used included 'now' and 'then' visual boards, sand timers, verbal cues and the rainbow timer. Staff said they had varying levels of success with these methods and continued to work with the children and support them to regulate their emotions during processes they found stressful.

### **Physical and material environment**

The children had access to a large, bright, well-resourced and well laid out activity room. Toys and activities were easily accessible from low level shelves or storage units in defined interest areas. The materials available to the children to explore and engage with included games and resources that the staff had made, such as the 'animal feeding' game.

Interest areas in the room included the cosy area and library, black-out tent, construction area, art area, sensory play areas, home corner, small world areas and table-top activities area.

The children had access to more than one play space during the day and benefitted from being able to share the schools resources such as the hall, sensory room and occupational therapy room. The children also enjoyed access to several outdoor play spaces. The pre-school had their own playground at the back of the school, which was enclosed with a fence and gates. They also had access to the school grounds when not in use by the school children and to the new playground at the front of the ASD unit.

The children's artwork was displayed on the walls in the room and on the large noticeboard outside the room.

## 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 premises was kept secured. The children and parents entered the school building to access the service via a side door which was kept secured. There was a bell to ring to alert staff that someone was seeking entry. The entrance door had large glass panels which allowed the staff to see who was seeking entry before opening the door to them.

There was soft-fall matting or artificial grass under the climbing equipment in the outdoor areas used by the service.

The outdoor play areas were enclosed and secured to prevent unauthorised access to or unsupervised exit from these spaces.

Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. On the day of inspection the hot water was 28°C.

##### Infection control:

The service had a policy on infection prevention and control which included a hand-washing policy. Staff and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before eating, after messy play and after using the toilet or nappy changing.

Staff wiped down the tables before they were used for dining.

##### Administration of medication:

There was a policy on the administration of medication. Parental consent was sought before any medication was given to a child. None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of inspection.

##### Fire safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.