

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015CW024 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Little Orchard |
|-------------------------|----------------|

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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Seskin Road, Leighlinbridge, Co. Carlow |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | R93 KN72 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Thomas Lalor |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|

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| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 07/08/2026 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 25 | PM | 27 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow. |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>                | E Cullen                                          |
| <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).

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### Description of service

This full day care service is in Leighlinbridge village. A service is provided to children aged from 6 months to 6 years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8.30am and 5:30pm (including an Early Years Care and Education Programme (ECCE) sessional service from 9.00am to 12.30pm). A registered school age service is also provided. The premises is a detached four storey building with seven early years rooms. There is an additional prefabricated classroom at the rear of the building, two designated sleep rooms, and several outdoor play areas for the use of the children attending the service. The service was operating on a reduced capacity on the day of inspection; the following rooms were closed: baby and pear.

### Staffing

The service currently employs thirty staff members, which includes a management team, early years staff working directly with children, a cook, cleaner, maintenance person and early years community employment scheme participants. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5, 6, 8 and 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 – Management and Recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11 – Staffing levels, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First Aid, 27 - Supervision, 31 – Notification of Incidents. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 23 and 27. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the willow and beach rooms.

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.

### Additional Information

This inspection was triggered on foot of a statutory notification of incident submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate by the service.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

*(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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

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*(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and  
(c) these Regulations.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and additional named persons were available to deputise as required. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer and designated liaison person for example.

(2) Through review of records, and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that three staff members had commenced employment since the last inspection and files required review. To assess compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, one vetting disclosure was also identified as requiring review:

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required as no new staff member had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that two of the three new staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)(b)(c) Evidence of initial induction of new staff members and annual review of policies and procedures of the service was available on file. A recent change to a service policy in response to an incident had been effectively communicated and implemented by staff members, who demonstrated an awareness of the content of these policies in discussion with the inspector. Additional training in health and safety had also been completed by staff members.

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### Non-Compliance Information

(4) A provisional statement of results was available for one staff member. This record was not in compliance with the requirements of the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice: Qualifications in Pre School Services.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

A QQI Level 5 certificate in Early Learning and Care certificate is now on file for this employee.

Our recruitment and selection policy has been updated to reflect that we will ask for the final statement of results/certificate of qualification at interview stage, and this is what will go on file if the candidate is offered employment in the service.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Award certificate.

Recruitment and selection policy.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

### Compliance Information

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, and additional policies available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: policy on accidents and incidents, the policy on risk management, policy on complaints, policy on bottle feeding, policy on supervision of children and policy on health and safety in the service. These policies and procedures were appropriate and specific to the setting.

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### 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)(2) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 25 children with 11 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 27 children with 8 children during the afternoon.

### 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:

There was a keypad and buzzer entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. Entry to the service was monitored by staff members. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children.

Risk assessments were routinely completed for each room to ensure equipment and materials used in each of the rooms were appropriate for use by the age range of children using them. From the sample reviewed risk assessments were completed recently on hazards such as room temperatures, outdoor play and age-related issues. Assessments were also completed in response to incidents in the service such as injury to children or staff. They included a broad range of information including actions taken to reduce risks and next steps. In discussion with the inspector staff members also demonstrated an awareness of the importance of risk assessment in

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practice. A recent risk assessment in response to an incident, detailed the changes to practice which have been implemented to prevent reoccurrence.

Accident and incident books maintained a record of any incidents, these were completed in detail and signatures confirmed that relevant parents, staff and a manager were informed. Warm water used by children for handwashing was thermostatically controlled and maintained below 43°C. The temperature was recorded at 32.7°C in the main toilet block.

### Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with best practices in safe sleep and carried out physical checks on individual sleeping children, every 10 minutes, recording individual children's sleep positions, colour and breathing. Sleep room temperatures were continually monitored by staff, with a digital thermometer located in room. The temperature was regulated by portable air conditioning units in the room. Staff were familiar with the services sleep policy which was displayed in the sleep room. The sleep room temperature was recorded at 20.6°C, which was within the required temperature range of 18°C to 22°C for children over the age of one.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

The following observations were made in the wobbler room, which posed a potential risk of injury to children or staff:

1. The exit/entrance to the sleep room was partially obstructed by stacked chairs. These posed a potential trip hazard as staff members entered and exited the room while carrying children in their arms.
2. The leads of a telephone on a shelf accessible to the children were not adequately secured to prevent a child pulling on the leads.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. The stack of wobbler age chairs was removed from the area of exit/entry of the Wobbler Sleep Room door.

Staff have been reminded to move chairs back to the table following clean up after mealtimes. A memo was issued to the room and management asked for this memo to be displayed in the room.

2. Leads of telephone on shelf in Wobbler room adequately secured.

Staff reminded that monthly risk assessments in the room are to include this area going forward.

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### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographs, risk assessment and communication memo.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.

### 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) There were six staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes located in each early years room on the premises available for the use of the children attending the early years service. Staff members were also observed to bring a small first aid bag with groups during outdoor play.

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### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

There was appropriate supervision of children observed for the duration of the inspection. The layout of the early years rooms, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor area allowed for clear lines of sight of the children. Staff sat with children during snack and mealtimes, ensuring appropriate supervision while food was being consumed. The child staff ratios exceeded the requirements for care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

The children were observed to be escorted individually to the toilet area by a staff member when required. There were established protocols with parents and guardians for children transitioning to and from the school. The pick-up arrangements were observed where parents and guardians would enter via the main entrance and proceed to their child's room to collect their child from their caregivers.

The outdoor play space surrounded the building with interest areas dispersed to facilitate small clusters of child led play. The inspector observed that while children were outdoors the staff were strategically positioned around the outdoor space so as to have a line of view of children at play.

### Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

*(d) a serious injury to a pre-school child while attending the service that requires immediate medical treatment by a registered medical practitioner whether in a hospital or otherwise;*

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated compliance in notifying the Early Years Inspectorate of an incident that occurred in the service on 27 July 2026.