

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK016
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Name of Service:	Ballingarry pre-school
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Address of Service:	Unit 3, The Spar, Ballingarry, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 X3Y2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Edel Curtis
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/09/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	3
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd floor, Estuary House, Henry St. Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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).

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Description of service

Located in Ballingarry village, Co. Limerick, Ballingarry pre-school offers sessional and part-time childcare for children between 2 and 6 years old. The service runs from 9.00 am to 2.00 pm, Monday through Friday. A service for school aged children operates each afternoon. Located within a purpose-built premises, the facility features two fully equipped indoor preschool classrooms and a well-resourced natural outdoor garden.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and manager of the service. A designated person in charge has been appointed to oversee the day to day running of the facility. There are 4 additional adults employed to work at the preschool service.

All adults who work in the facility 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 unannounced 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

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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.*

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(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 designated person in charge was available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise if required.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a) There were written validated references available in respect of 5 staff employed at the service.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, references from an alternative source were provided.
- (c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was in place for a staff member who had resided outside the state for a period longer than 6 months.
- (4) All staff members had the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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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) The registered provider ensured that at all times there were a sufficient number of qualified staff working in all areas of the service in line with the requirement of the Regulation 11.

(2) The service operates a sessional and a part-time service from 9.00am to 2.00pm. On the day of the inspection for the morning session from 9.00am to 12.00pm there were 22 preschool children present in Preschool room 1 with 2 staff members. There were 8 preschool children present with 2 staff in Preschool room 2. There were 3 preschool children who stayed for the extended part-time hours to 2.00pm. The adult child ratio met the requirements of Regulation 11.

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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 maintained a strict healthy eating policy, with parents supplying nutritious daily snacks for their children. A mid-morning snack was served to all attending the sessional service and for the children who remained at the facility until 2.00 pm, a second healthy snack was provided immediately following the conclusion of the morning service. Fresh drinking water remained accessible with children's individual water bottles kept within their reach at all times.

The children had unrestricted access to the toilets, which were conveniently located adjacent to both preschool rooms. The facility ensured hygienic handwashing by continuously supplying hot water, liquid soap, and paper hand towels.

To ensure children got outside in all weather conditions, wet suits and wellingtons were provided specifically for outdoor play. Tissues and wipes remained permanently within the children's reach, and all waste was properly managed using foot-pedal-operated lidded bins.

Throughout the day, children had ample opportunity to move freely and explore their surroundings. A well-resourced natural garden area provided them with extensive space to participate in a wide variety of outdoor activities.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operated from two well-resourced indoor rooms organised with a variety of developmentally appropriate interest areas. These accessible stations included a construction zone, a dress-up corner, a hairdressing salon, and an imaginative home play area featuring a large dollhouse. Additionally, a dedicated rest and relaxation reading corner provided a large, soft couch situated next to a book stand. Numerous low-level tables and tuff trays facilitated messy play, arts, and crafts, while colouring, cutting, and painting materials were kept within easy reach on open shelving. The deliberate layout of the facility ensured that adults could easily supervise the children as they moved between different interest areas across both rooms.

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Outdoors, the children enjoyed access to a large, natural garden area designed for running, climbing, planting, digging, and building. Large wooden sheltered structures within the outdoor space enabled the children to spend extended periods outside regardless of the weather conditions.

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 service maintained a safe, secure, and well-monitored environment for all pre-school children through several proactive measures. The staff strictly managed the locked main entrance door to control authorised entry and prevent children from exiting unsupervised. Indoors, fire exits remained clear and unobstructed, while cleaning agents were safely stored out of reach of children. All toys and play materials were well-maintained, age-appropriate, and free from sharp edges, pinch points, or crush points. Waste was kept inaccessible in both indoor and outdoor areas through the use of lidded, foot-pedal-operated bins. Finally, outdoor safety was ensured by securing exit gates against unauthorised access to unsafe areas, accompanied by continuous staff supervision during all outdoor play activities

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 33 preschool children to attend the service at any one time. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2026 and is due to expire on the 27th of March 2027.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The entrance to the service was secured and all visitor access was managed appropriately. The outdoor areas were safe and well secured, preventing any unauthorised exit from the area. The gate was locked between the car park and the playground and staff only had access to the key to unlock the gate.
- (c) Protective covers were provided on all light fittings.
- (d) The premises throughout appeared clean with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the building. Photographs of recent painting completed in Preschool room 2 were submitted following the inspection.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary accommodations for both adults and children were provided in an easily accessible space.