

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS078
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Name of Service:	Kiddiecare Childcare
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Address of Service:	Harbour Street, Mountmellick, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 KV25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Bowes
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35 K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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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).

Description of service

Kiddiecare Childcare is one of three services operated by the registered provider. The service offers full day care, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 1-6 years old. Opening hours are from 08:00am 18:00pm, Monday-Friday. The service operates from a single storey premises located in the rural town of Mountmellick, Co. Laois. Two pre-school rooms, a Toddler room, an outdoor preschool room, a relaxation room referred to as 'the nest', a sleep room and kitchen are provided. A portacabin is also onsite and used as an office and staff room. A large outdoor play area is located to the rear and side of the building. Carparking is available in a carpark outside the service.

Staffing

The registered employer employs nine staff members to work in the service, eight childcare staff and an axillary staff member. The registered provider works in the service directly with the children and was present on the day of inspection.

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

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This inspection was unannounced 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(c)(d), (4) – Management and recruitment,
- Regulation 11 (1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- Regulation 15 – Record of preschool child,
- Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials,
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child,
- Regulation 25(1), (2)(a)(b)– First aid,
- Regulation 26(1)(a)(b), (4) – Fire,
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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.

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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,*
- (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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider and deputy person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that two new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 24 October 2025. The staff files of the newly employed staff members were reviewed and the following was noted;

(a)

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Four written validated references were available from a previous employer.

(c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the two new staff members. In regard to all staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)
Police vetting was not required as no new staff had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

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 children. In the morning on arrival at the service, there were eight children being supervised directly by six adults. In the afternoon, there were four children being supervised by five adults. The registered provider was also available to assist if required.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection demonstrated by the following observation;

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For the morning session there were 8 children aged between 2-5 years being supervised directly by 6 adults.

For the afternoon session there were 4 children aged between 2-5 years being supervised directly by 5 adults.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises duration the operational hours of the service. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

A sample of 12 records were reviewed. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above regulation for all the records reviewed.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A wide variety of age and developmentally appropriate equipment was available indoors and outdoors. Each preschool room had clearly defined areas of interest including kitchen corners, small world houses with play furniture, modelling dough stations with natural materials such as shells, sticks and stones. A loft area in the Senior Preschool room accessed via a ramp provided a space with a small world house, an airport area and dinosaur area. Literacy areas had a range of books and comfortable rest areas for children to sit and take a break from activities.

A variety of arts and crafts materials were accessible to children at wall mounted painting stations in each room and craft tables with containers of colours, stickers and stamps. Messy play was facilitated with sand and water troughs in each room.

Open accessible shelves displayed a variety of wooden puzzles and jigsaws, shape sorters, beads, laces and toy vehicles.

A large well-resourced outdoor play area with natural grass was provided at the back and side of the preschool. Ride on equipment such as cars, tractors and scooters were available to the children in the garden. Climbing frames, digging areas with a variety of equipment and a metal water trough with equipment for children to splash. Equipment offering challenging opportunities consisted of a wooden wobble bridge, a tyre obstacle course, a zig zag walking beam and manmade low hills. The outdoor environment offered an opportunity to engage with nature with the use of natural materials such as, a man-made tunnel made from willow trees for the children to run through, a selection of wooden mud kitchens with metal pot, pans and utensils, and a sow and grow garden with vegetables planted by the children.

Child size picnic benches with tables were located throughout the garden with sunshade umbrellas. Large trees also provided shady areas during hot weather.

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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 entrances to the service were secured and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorised persons gaining access to the service and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.

A walk around the perimeter of the service indicated all internal/external gates and access points were secured with locks and handles out of reach of the children.

Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

Warm water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were available for hygienic hand washing and drying.

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste in the preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Outdoor sinks and paper hand towel dispensers were available throughout the garden area for hand washing during outdoor play.

Each preschool room had a fridge for the storage of lunch boxes with perishable food items.

Administration of Medication:

The registered provider informed the inspector that no child attending the service was on a care plan or specific medication. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the service. No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

A designated sleep room located off the Toddler room had two cots for children who required a cot to sleep in.

Nine low-level beds were available for children aged two years and above who required a sleep during the day.

Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction. The fire assembly point was located at the front of the premises.

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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)

Eight staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR). A staff member qualified in FAR was available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the preschool and accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was recorded on 24 June 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in 24 October 2025. The smoke detection alarms in the premises were serviced on 12 March 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for 55 children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2027.