

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE154
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Name of Service:	Westbury Preschool
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Address of Service:	46 Fernleigh, Westbury, Athlunkard, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V94 H2TT
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Hickey
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
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Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes
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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).

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Description of service

Westbury Preschool is located within a residential estate, in Westbury, County Clare. Eleven children were present on the day of inspection. The service operates a sessional programme Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00. The service operates from the registered provider's house in a detached two storey domestic dwelling. The programme of care and education is provided in one open plan room and in the outdoor area to the rear of the building.

Staffing

On the 16 June 2026 the registered provider and three adults worked directly with the children. The adults maintained a record of ongoing engagement in continuing professional development.

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 and premises and facilities. 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 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

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Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance (1) (3)(a)(b)

Regulation 25- First aid (1)(2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 28 - Insurance

Regulation 29 – Premises (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)

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, 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 person in charge, and a second person was available to deputise if required.

(b)

The registered provider and three adults were available onsite during the inspection.

(2)

Four files were available in respect of the registered provider and three adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Four written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

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- (b)
Four written and validated references from a source other than a past employer in respect of adults working in the service was available.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the four adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was available in respect of one adult working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications from Level 5 to Level 7 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (3)
On the 16 June 2026 the adult to child ratio was maintained in the service. Four adults cared for eleven children in attendance.

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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

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children. A care room and the well resourced outdoor play area were accessed by the pre-school children during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet.

The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, engaged with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort.

The toilets were easily accessible to the children from the playroom, with handwashing and hand drying facilities that included warm water, soap, and paper towels. Tissues, wipes, and appropriate waste disposal were provided.

A change of clothes and protective clothing for outdoor play in wet weather were available.

The adults supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner when assistance was required with toileting.

The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development.

The service followed a healthy eating policy, encouraging parents to provide nutritious snacks for lunchtime each day. A variety of sandwiches, yoghurts and fruit were observed in the children's lunches. Drinks of water were accessible to the children throughout the session. Lunchtime occurred at a low-level table in the outdoor area and was observed to be relaxed and unhurried with children allowed sufficient time to remain seated and finish their lunches.

The adults offered praise and encouragement, and children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities in the indoor and

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outdoor environments. The children transitioned with ease between the indoor and the outdoor area for play based activities.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The service promoted a strong sense of belonging, connectedness, and wellbeing through the development of positive relationships. Staff actively supported children in forming and sustaining meaningful connections by using individualised communication, which included addressing each child by name, and engaging at the child's physical level. Peer relationships were developed through a structured balance of small and large group activities, which successfully fostered cooperation, collaboration, and group cohesion. A strong sense of teamwork between the adults and an ethos of professionalism ensured a collaborative approach in the provision of care and learning. The adults supported the children in individual and group play based activities throughout the session and engaged in open ended discussions.

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The play-based programme of care was child focused, with children consulted in the facilitation of the programme and the adults followed the children's lead in the activities. The children were notified in advance of transitions between activities.

Partnerships with parents and guardians were valued and maintained through a structured communication framework. Prior to enrolment, the registered provider conducted individual meetings with prospective families to facilitate tours of the pre-school and present the pre-school policies. Ongoing parental engagement was sustained through daily informational exchanges at arrival and departure times, the use of a text messaging group and a weekly newsletter sent to parents via email to advise of activities the children engaged in and provide links to the songs and stories that the children learnt during the week. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal preferences, individual interests and capabilities. An individual learning journal, which is shared with the parents, was available for each child demonstrating the children's progress and creative work.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) no person other than-*
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,*
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*
 - (iii) an employee, or*
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)**
A daily attendance record of each child's arrival to and departure from the service was maintained by the adults working in the service.
- (3)(a)**
The entry of any persons to the service was approved by the registered provider.
- (b)**
A record of persons who were allowed entry to the service was maintained and available on file.

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.*

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Compliance Information

(1)

Two adults working in the service held a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

An adequately stocked first aid box was readily accessible in the playroom.

(b)

The first aid box was available to the children at all times.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A monthly record was available of the fire drills carried out in the service. The record indicated that the most recent fire drill took place on 05 May 2026.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place on the 08 December 2025 and the 09 December 2025 respectively.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed at the exit points in the building.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty two children attending on a sessional basis. The policy is valid until 27 March 2027.

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 well maintained with no visible structural issues.
- (b)
The entrance to the service was secured and all visitor access was managed appropriately. The outdoor areas were safe and secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from the area.
- (c)
Natural lighting was provided through windows in the playroom and this was supplemented with artificial lighting. A room temperature of 21.8°C was recorded with heating provided by radiators when required. All windows in the service were openable to provide natural ventilation.
- (d)
The service was clean and well maintained with records of daily and weekly cleaning schedules in place.
- (e)
The children had access to sanitary facilities adjacent to the pre-school rooms. The sanitary facility was appropriately equipped with toilets and wash hand basins. A sanitary facility was also available for use by the adults. The water temperature at the wash hand basins was recorded at a safe temperature of 30°C. Liquid

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soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying and a pedal operated, lined, lidded bin was provided for the safe disposal of waste.