

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL134		
Name of Service:	Kids Cottage		
Address of Service:	78 Church Street, Skerries, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K34 WF60		
Name of Registered Provider:	Jackie Keane		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	10/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford		
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).			
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable		

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Description of service

Kids Cottage is a private Early Years' service which offers sessional care and education to children aged from 2 to 6 years of age from 9am to 12 midday Monday to Friday. The service operates from a terraced thatched cottage on a mixed commercial and residential street in Skerries, north Dublin. There is currently one care room in operation to the rear of the service which includes sanitary facilities for the children in attendance. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the children at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs four staff members to include the registered provider who works directly with the children attending the service, a deputy person in charge and two childcare staff. On the day of inspection there were three staff members working directly with the children.

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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

- Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4)
- Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(3),(8)(c)
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child,

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- Regulation 25 First Aid,
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures,
- Regulation 28 Insurance and
- Regulation 29 Premises.

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

Supporting evidence was received from the registered provider on the 19 March 2025 to address the outstanding non-compliance in Regulation 23.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

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Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

Compliance Information

The staff files of four staff members employed in the service were reviewed.

(2)

(a) The following references were available from a past employer.

- Two written validated references for one staff member and one validated reference for one staff member.

(b) The following references were available from a source other than a past employer

- Two written references for the registered provider,
- Two written and validated references for one staff member and one validated reference for one staff member.

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(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for four staff members. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was not required for any staff members as documentation available demonstrated that no staff member had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) On review of documentation available four staff members working with the children had evidence to demonstrate that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

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- (1) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.
- (3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as there were 3 staff members caring for 22 children aged between 2-6 years of age. A staff member was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio to support children with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)scheme.
- (8)(c) No applicable as the service employs four staff members.

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 ate a snack from home which was eaten in a relaxed and sociable environment. Staff sat and chatted to the children while they enjoyed their foods of yogurt, crackers, sandwiches, fruit and water.
 - Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed to use gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Staff supported the children in taking turns and sharing while they played.
 - Staff were observed supporting the children's learning, sitting and engaging with the children and using prompts to extend play experiences. The children appeared happy and content throughout the inspection.
 - Children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required.
 - Staff members worked well together in delivering care to the children while maintaining contact and communication with parents to ensure a consistent approach.

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- The care room was well laid out in designated areas to create an atmosphere that was welcoming and engaging to the children. All the equipment was accessible and available which enabled them to develop their skills and interests and become independent and confident learners. Materials available included a home area, construction space, tabletop games and puzzles, arts and crafts and a rest area with a library. The children had the freedom to become involved in their play with staff adopting a flexible and child led approach to the service activities such as circle and snack time.
- The care room walls were used to display each child's family and a birthday calendar, all of which were in visual positions to provide the children with a sense of belonging and assist with their settling into the service. Ongoing observations were completed by staff to inform and assist with short term planning and curriculum.
- A selection of age-appropriate equipment was available in the fully enclosed paved and artificial grass surfaced outdoor play area to the rear of the premises. Equipment available included ride-on toys, slides, mud kitchen with pots, pans and wooden spoons, tree house with slide and swings, and a garage with cars and trucks. A sheltered area was available which enabled the staff and children to enjoy outdoor play in all weathers. A locked shed was provided to store the outdoor play materials.

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:

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- The main entrance to the service was closely monitored by staff who granted access by a lock which was out of the children's reach.
- The care room was observed to be suitable and safe with all cleaning agents and sharp implements out of children's reach.
- The premises and outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were available in the sanitary facilities used by the children, these included thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and bins.
Children were observed to wash their hands before lunch and after using the toilet.
- Children's perishable food from home was refrigerated on arrival to the service and the tables were cleaned before and after lunch.
- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care room and sanitary facility. The care room and sanitary facility had open windows to extract any stale air.

Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service and all fire equipment to include fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced yearly.
- The designated fire exit was illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years as one disclosure was dated more than three years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In response to the non-compliance the service has responded with the numerous steps they have taken since 1 August 2024 to renew garda vetting for the staff member. The service states that going forward they are aware

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that the process necessary for completing Garda Clearance, will start within 12 weeks prior of possible expiry of Garda Clearance for staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Corrective actions.

Summary Comment

The service has addressed the non-compliance in their corrective and preventive actions. Until renewed garda vetting is received, the non-compliance remains outstanding.

Supporting evidence was received from the registered provider on the 19 March 2025 to address the outstanding non-compliance in Regulation 23.

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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) with an expiry date of 26 September 2026 was always available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises and were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

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- (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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that the most recent fire drill was conducted on 17 January 2025.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced on 29 February 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced in February 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available for inspection for a maximum of 35 children on a sessional basis with an expiry date of 27 March 2025.

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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-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The service was equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities for the staff and children in attendance. There were 2 toilets and 2 wash hand basins for the 22 children in attendance and 1 toilet and 1 wash hand basin for the staff employed in the service.