

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022CC001
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Name of Service:	Jackie's Little Learners Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Glantane National School, Glantane, Mallow, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	P51 PK65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jacqueline Sheehan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	10
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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	N/A
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Description of service

Jackie's Little Learners Pre-school is a privately owned early years care and education service in operation since September 2022. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated in both the morning session from 08:45 am until 11:45 am and in the afternoon session 12:15 pm until 15:15 pm. The service is registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years old and currently children attending are aged from 2 years 6 months to 6 years of age. It is opened 38 weeks of the year, and a school age service is available in the morning from 7:30 am until 9:00 am and in the afternoon from 2:00 pm until 6:00 pm.

Jackie's Little Learners Pre-school is located in the townland of Brittas, Southwest of Mallow in North Cork. The service operates from a large care room located to the rear of Glantane National School. Within the care room there are two children's toilets and a kitchen area. The adult toilet is located in the hallway outside the classroom. The service has access to two main outdoor play areas, one of which is covered, and the other is located on the external gable wall of the care room.

Staffing

There are four adults, including the registered provider and two AIM Support Workers, working directly with the children in the service. An additional adult is available to provide relief cover, if required.

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 safety. 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 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, deputies, 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,*

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(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 designated person in charge and two adults were available to deputise in the service.
 - (b) The designated person and the deputies were available during both the morning and afternoon services.
 - (c) The service's management structure, which detailed staff roles and responsibilities, was visible on the noticeboard in the corridor, outside the care room.
- (2) Staff files of the four adults and the relief worker were reviewed;
- (a) (b) Eight validated references were available from past employers and two validated references were available from other sources.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all of the adults working directly with the children, including the relief worker. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Two overseas police vetting disclosures were available for two adults who had resided outside the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as adults.
- (4) There was evidence that five adults had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level Five, or above, on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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

The following policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 were reviewed and were found to contain the necessary information;

- Healthy Eating Policy
- Outings Policy
- Infection Control/Toileting Policy

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.

(3) The adult child ratios were met. There were nineteen children in attendance with two adults and two AIM Support Workers in the morning and ten children in attendance in the afternoon session with two adults and one AIM Support Worker.

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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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) Of the 29 children present on the day of the inspection a sample of 12 children's registration forms were examined. They included a cross section of the records of the children attending from both the morning and afternoon sessions. All 12 records were found to contain the relevant particulars of (a) to (i) above.
- (3) (c) The records, as identified in paragraph (1), were available for review by the inspector on the premises.

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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 children were observed eating healthy and nutritious food during snack time at 11:00 am. Staff stated that the food had been prepared by the parents/guardians and was noted to conform to the service's healthy eating policy. Examples included dinosaur shaped sandwiches, berried fruits and yogurt.
- Water was available for the children at all times from individually labelled bottles placed within easy reach from a nearby table in the care room. A jug of water and cups were available in the event a child did not have an individual bottle.
- The children's sanitary area was located off the care room and children were observed accessing the toilet area independently. Adults were available to provide assistance, if required. Nappy changing facilities were available in the adult sanitary area, staff stated that no children are currently in nappies.
- Independence was encouraged and supported; children were observed hanging up their dressing up outfits and attempting to pull up zips and close buttons on their coats. Adults provided assistance to children who required help.
- There was ample room in both the outdoor and indoor areas for children to move and explore their environments.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff members were observed sitting at the tables enjoying snack with the children. The atmosphere was lively with children engaged in social conversation with each other and with the adults. Staff were observed listening and responding to children and heard using strategies such as open questions and speculating in order to extend the children's thinking and learning.
- Children were encouraged to engage positively with one another in the outdoor area in activities that required turn taking with staff gently reminding the children not to jump in front of waiting children.
- A key person approach was stated as being in place with named staff assigned responsibility for building relationships with their assigned children and their families.

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- Informal and formal meetings with staff and management were documented. The registered provider furnished the inspector with copies of meetings which took place on the 26 August 2024 and 4 September 2024. Details of topics discussed included children settling in, movement breaks for children, uniforms and room layout.
- Various methods of communication were stated as being available to inform and exchange information with parents/guardians including a personal messaging application, face to face meetings at drop off and collection, emails and texts.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Children's learning journals were easily accessible from a shelf on the book rack; children could take them down and look at them. Each journal was identifiable from the child's photograph and name on the front cover. They each contained children's artwork and photographs of the children in the service carrying out activities. Observations of the children were noted which were linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, and detailed the children's progress and learning in the service. Staff stated that the learning journals are sent home at the end of each year.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling. Staff were observed reading stories to the children in the book corner and discussions on the nature walk and in the care room centred around autumn colours of orange, red, green and brown.
- Activities were mainly child led and children were observed opting in and out of activities throughout the day. These included making leaf people from the leaves collected on the nature walk, playing with the gluten free autumn coloured playdough and selecting toys and materials to play by themselves or in a small group.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) With regard to the number of pre-school children, their respective ages and the amount of time they spent on the premises; there was a variety of age and developmentally appropriate materials and equipment in the care room and in the outdoor play areas. These provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of all of the children. They were available from well stocked baskets on shelving which was easily accessible by the children and offered a wide variety of choice while promoting independence.
- There are two outdoor play areas available, one of which had an overhead cover enabling the children to play outdoors in all weathers. Children playing outdoors in the afternoon were observed to have access to equipment which promoted gross motor skills such as climbing, cycling, rocking and sliding. While children in the morning on a nature walk were observed to have opportunities for challenge and safe risk; climbing on large stepping stones and jumping from stone walls, both activities were supervised by the adults, at all times.
- (b) In the care room, the children had the opportunity to rest/relax in two designated cosy quiet areas with soft furnishings which included washable bean chairs, a bespoke children's chair, a children's sized chaise lounge, adult sofa and colourful rainbow mats on the floor. A book area, with age and stage appropriate books, was located within one of the areas and children were observed in these areas throughout both sessions. Three sleep mats and appropriate bed linen were available for children should they wish to rest or sleep, blinds could be adjusted along with the lighting to provide ambient lighting in the rest areas.

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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 main entrance door was secured upon arrival. Entry was by a buzzer which was answered by staff members or by a keypad in use by staff, preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service.
- The registered provider was observed standing at the main entrance door to the building on arrival and departure, signing the children in and out, ensuring they entered and exited the building safely. A staff member was standing waiting, in sight of the children, at the entrance to the care room when the children walked towards the care room, along the corridor.
- The main care room door was operated with a thumb twist cylinder and a hook and eye latch ensuring no child could leave the care room unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were not accessible to the children.
- Handrails were in place on the ramp of the main entrance door ensuring the children could enter and exit the building safely.
- Blind cords were secured with hooks, out of reach of the children.
- All toys and equipment in the indoor and outdoor play areas appeared in good condition and looked well maintained.
- Storage units were secured, preventing them from falling or tipping on top of the children.
- The electrical flexes from the screen monitor were inaccessible by the children.
- Indoor waste was secured in pedal operated bins.
- The kettle was stored in the kitchen area which was secured with door with a sliding bolt.
- The outdoor play area at the gable end of the building was secured with a high metal fence and a high gate, ensuring children could not leave the area unsupervised.
- The main perimeter of the school yard was secured with a concrete wall and metal gates with sliding bolts.

Infection Control:

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- Wash hand basins, in use by both the staff and children, were observed to be fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, dispensing foam soap, disposable paper towels and pedal operated bins to dispose of paper waste.
- Children were observed hanging their belongings on hooks in the corridor, away from the floor area.
- Perishable food was stored in the fridge in the kitchen area, preventing spoilage.
- Tissues were available and staff observed assisting children with nasal hygiene were observed disposing of the tissues in the pedal operated bin and washing their hands afterwards.
- Age and stage appropriate picture reminders were visible in the children's sanitary area reminding children of hygienic hand washing.
- Children were observed washing their hands regularly particularly before eating food and after toileting and coming in from outdoors.
- Staff were observed sanitising tables before and after serving food and sweeping the floors ensuring the area was safe and clean after use.
- Cleaning schedules were noted to be completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medications, in their original boxes, were stored in an airtight box located in a locked cupboard, out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on the day of inspection

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation notices were visible in the indoor care room.
- All emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.
- Fire extinguishers were secured by brackets on the walls of the corridors and in the service.
- The fire assembly point was visible in the outdoor play area.

Outing:

The inspector was invited on the outdoor nature walk with the children, which staff stated happens weekly. The following safety measures were observed in alignment with the service's outings policy and procedures;

- Insurance was in place for outings
- Risk assessment prior to walk
- Permission slips signed

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- Children wore high visibility vests and were paired together
- A staff member brought a charged phone which had all of the parent's/guardians contact details in the event of an emergency
- A first aid bag was available, if required
- Children were counted before during and at the end of the walk
- Staff primarily walked on the roadside of the footpath ensuring the children were on the inside, away from traffic. Staff placed themselves strategically at the front, middle and back of the line, ensuring the children walked and stayed together.
- Staff played a traffic light game to encourage the children to stop when required.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that two adults had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed and two additional adults had a certificate in paediatric first aid. The roster indicated that at least one adult with first aid responder training was available at all times.

(2) (a)(b) The suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times. The inspector observed that it was easily accessible by the adults from a locked cupboard in the care room.

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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 firefighting 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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service in both the morning and afternoon sessions. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill in the morning session was 19 September 2024 and in the afternoon session the date recorded was 10 September 2024.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the notice board in the kitchen area of the service.

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

The children were observed being appropriately supervised by the adults in the service throughout both sessions, examples included;

- At drop off and collection times; being greeted by the registered provider at the door of the building and by a staff member stationed at the care room door during drop off and collection times
- Outdoor play; including walking in pairs on the pavement on the nature walk with adults stationed on the outside nearest the road
- Indoor play, the layout of the designated areas allowed the adults to easily supervise the children
- Ensuring the children were dressed appropriately for the weather
- Assisting where required with snack time and toileting.

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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

A certificate was available to evidence that the registered provider had insurance for the service. The service was insured for 22 children on a sessional basis and the expiry date was noted as 27 March 2025. Details included cover for outings, fire and theft.