

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE027
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Clarecastle Community Playgroup
-------------------------	---------------------------------

Address of Service:	Old National School, Clarecastle, Co. Clare
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	V95 RT44
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Cynthia McEnery
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	09/06/2026
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	10
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This service opened in 2002. The part-time service is operated by a community group in Clarecastle old National School. The service is located in an urban setting in Clarecastle Village. This school building is a single storey structure and the service is accessed through a side door dedicated exclusively for use by the pre-school. The service is provided in three playrooms and the outdoor space to the rear of the school is used for outdoor play for the children. It caters for up to a maximum number of 55 pre-school children, between the ages of 3-6 years. The service is open Monday-Fridays 09.30hrs - 13.00hrs.

Staffing

The registered provider operated the sessional and part time service assisted by 11 adults. On the day of inspection, the registered provider and 10 adults were present supervising 43 pre-school children in the morning, and 10 pre-school children present until 13:00pm.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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*
- (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,*
- (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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 named person in charge, and a deputy was available to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that the registered provider or the deputy were available on the premises each day.

(2) The files of all 12 staff members working in the service were reviewed.

(a) There were 22 written and validated references submitted by staff from previous employers on file.

(b) There were 2 written and validated references submitted by staff from sources other than past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff employed to work in the service.

The Garda vetting for the staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had resided outside of jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) There were 12 staff members with the appropriate childcare qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there were ten adults and the registered provider working with forty-three pre-school children in the morning and ten pre-school children present until 13:00 hrs. The adult/child ratio in the service was correct.
- (2) The staff roster showed that the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service

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) BASIC NEEDS

Each child's learning, development and wellbeing was supported during the session.

Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The snacks and drinks provided were adequate, suitable, nutritious, and varied for each pre-school child attending the service. The children were given sufficient time to eat and enjoy their snacks and drinks without being rushed.

Sanitary accommodation was located close to the playroom in the service and children were observed to toilet independently. A supply of tissues and wipes were accessible to the children. Lidded bins were available for the safe disposal of waste. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their level of independence.

The rest areas with comfortable seating and cushions were accessible to all children.

The staff members responded to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The children were supported as they played individually and as part of a group. The staff were observed to be kind and caring in all their interactions with the children. Each child was treated as an individual and had their likes, abilities and natural tendencies understood and respected.

Photographic evidence of activities undertaken and art portfolios were available to share with parents and helped support a sense of working in partnership.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

The playrooms were equipped with open shelving units where children could access play equipment and materials independently. Shelving units were also used effectively to create play spaces, such as the library area, home corner, construction area, small world area, arts, crafts area and tabletop activities area. Sand play and water play activities were available indoors and outside. Each of the areas were well resourced with toys and accessories including sensory and natural materials. Good supplies of books were available which helped support language development. The walls of the rooms were decorated with posters and the children's artwork.

For outdoor play the children have daily access to the enclosed all weather ground play area, the sport field and the school yard for physical activity, fresh air and exploration.

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) Three staff held current certification in first aid responder for children and were available at all times while the service operated.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the entrance hallway and playrooms.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last recorded date of practice of fire drill was the 2nd of May 2026.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers and the smoke alarms were last serviced in October 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the entrance hallway and in each room of the service

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate for the service was available and adequate and had an expiry date of 27th of 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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (a) The premises was of sound and stable structure and there were no visible defects.
- (b) The entrance and exit doors were secure to prevent children from exiting and to prevent unauthorised access.
- (c) Heating, ventilation and lighting were adequate in each area of the service.
- (d) Each room and each sanitary area was clean and well maintained.
- (e) Suitable sanitary facilities were available for both staff and children.

All waste was managed appropriately.

Hygienic hand washing, drying and nappy changing facilities were available.