

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY257
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Name of Service:	Castleross Creche & Playschool
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Address of Service:	Ervalagh, Ahascragh, Ballinasloe, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H53 H049
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Name of Registered Provider:	Noreen Kennedy
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	32
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency Unit 2, First Floor, Loughrea Shopping Centre, Athenry Road, Loughrea, Co. Galway. H62 XR82
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin
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).

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Description of service

This privately operated pre-school offers full day care from 07.30 to 17:30, for children aged between 0 and 6 years, from Monday to Friday. The service is registered to cater for a maximum number of 50 children at any one time. There are four ground floor pre-school playrooms- namely the Baby room, the Toddler room, the Junior room and the Senior room. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals are prepared, cooked and stored on site. There is a sleep room with five cots and two stackable beds, available for children requiring sleep provision. There are outdoor play areas to the front, rear and sides of the premises.

Staffing

There are nine staff working in the service including the registered provider and a cook.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 -

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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.

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.*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

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(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 a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that there were nine members of staff employed in the service.

(2) (a) There were nine written and appropriately validated references available from a previous employer.

(b) There were six written and appropriately validated reference available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for nine staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosure was available for one adult working in the service as they had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.

(4) Eight staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Non-Compliance Information

(9)(2)(a)(b) Three written and appropriately validated references were not available in respect of two staff members working in the service.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out completely before staff members were appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Three written and validated references are now on file for the two staff members. The registered provider will ensure that staff recruitment files are completed in full prior to any staff taking up duties in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation evidence submitted to the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified on inspection under Regulation 9.

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 with the children attending the preschool service.
There were seven adults working directly with children on the day of inspection. There was a member of staff preparing and cooking fresh meals onsite.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

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- Baby room: One adult cared for 5 children aged 1 year old.
- Toddler room: Two adults cared for 11 children aged between 1 and 2 years of age.
- Junior room: Two adults cared for 14 children aged between 2 and 3 years of age.
- Senior room: Two adults cared for 18 children aged between 4 and 5 years of age.

(8) There were at least two adults present in the service during the operation hours of 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.

Compliance Information

Basic Needs

(1)(a)

- Drinking water was available on low tables in each playroom to all children throughout the day. In the senior room the children could self-serve from a water dispenser.
- In the morning a snack was provided from home which consisted of yogurts, crackers, cheese and sandwiches. Children in the senior room had a rolling lunch system.
- The main meal of chicken curry, rice, sweetcorn and carrots was served at 13.00. Extra dinner was available and given to children who wanted a second helping.
- The second meal of the day was served at 15.30 and the menu varied from pesto pasta, toasties, beans on toast or homemade pizzas.
- Care and attention were taken during mealtimes to eat at the child's pace and staff encouraged and supported children to feed themselves independently according to their age and stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner during meal and snack times.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting practices.
- Staff responded to each child's individual needs and children's nappies were changed in a timely manner.

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- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in these areas for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- The children's nap and sleep times were tailored to each child's individual needs.
- The children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day. Children moved freely between indoors and outdoors. In the preschool room the children spent considerable time outdoors in the well-equipped outdoor play areas on the day of inspection.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- The adults working with the children created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.

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 written record was available to demonstrate monthly fire drills completed in the service with the last fire drill completed on 16/06/2026.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the last annual service on 17/11/2025 and the smoke detection annual service on 08/06/2026.
- (4) There was evidence of the fire evacuation procedures setting out the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire in the playrooms and in the entrance lobby.

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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

The service's insurance specifying the address of the service, catering for 50 children at any one time, with an expiry date of 27th of March 2027, was available. The insurance covered -

- public liability
- personal accident
- against fire and theft
- buildings
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision.