

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH025
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Name of Service:	Shannon Pre School
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Address of Service:	Resource Centre, Connaught Street, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 V9K6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Cyril Dully
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes
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

The service is currently operating a sessional service from 09:30 to 12:30 on a Monday to Friday basis. The service is part of a multiple operated by Athlone Community Services Council, CLG. This part time service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age.

The Early Years' Service consists of two pre-school rooms in an adapted single storey building located on Connaught Street, Athlone, Co Westmeath. A small outdoor play area is located at the back of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs three adults in the service. The designated person in charge and two adults were working with the children on the 4 June 2026. The registered provider does not work with 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

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.

Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(3)(4)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (2)(8)(a)

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Regulation 15 -Record of a pre-school child (1)(h)

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

Regulation 20 – Rest and play facilities

Regulation 22- Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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 32- Complaints

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 person in charge, 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*
- (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.*

(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.

(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.

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

A clear management structure was identified and located in the pre-school room indicating the person in charge and the deputy person in charge.

Three staff files were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the three staff members.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the three staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that vetting was completed prior to the commencement of the newly employed staff into the service.

(4)

The staff members and the registered provider working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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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 directly with the children.

(2)

There were twelve children attending for the morning session supervised directly by the designated person in charge and two staff members.

(8)(a)

The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

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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:

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

Compliance Information

(1)(h) Further to a corrective action taken since the last inspection on the 3 October 2024 a record of childhood immunisation details were available for children attending 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

(1)(a)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service as children learned through play. Children were happily engaged in tabletop activities and free play. Small group work was observed as adults supported children with their one-to-one activity. Children enjoyed singing songs and actions as they prepared for graduation from pre-school. Transitions were seamless as children were given notice to change from one activity to another. Children were given a choice as they selected what activity they wanted to participate in and where they wanted to sit in the playroom. A little helper system was in operation as children gave out the lunch to their peers encouraging confidence and responsibility. Children enjoyed their friend's birthday celebrations during the morning session. Adults were familiar with the children and their personalities. Adults held children in positive regard using their individual names, interacting and conversing with children at eye level as they sat with them for their morning snack. Soft language tones were used by the adults when conversing and interacting with children. Adults praised children on completion of activities. An access and inclusion plan was available for children requiring extra support and assistance in the service.

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The service worked in partnership with parents in the following ways: A verbal handover is given on collection, an electronic system was in use for communication with parents sharing photographs and updates of the children's daily activities. The child's learning folder depicting the child's play and work activities is shared with parents on graduation day on the 24 June 2026.

The indoor environment provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative and enriching for the children. Low level tables and chairs were in place. Age and stage appropriate toys and play materials were accessible to children on low level drawer units. Photographs, artwork including "planting" and "toastie Thursday" and posters were displayed in the playroom. Defined areas of interest included: a construction area, a home area, a hair salon, a shop, a dolls house and dress up.

The child's daily routine and evidence of the Early Childhood Curriculum was displayed in the pre-school room.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable play equipment was provided in the indoor environment.

(b)

Children were observed to rest and relax in the cosy rest area provided in the pre-school room.

(4)

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The outdoor play area is to the rear of the service which is safe and secure surrounded by a high wall. It is a small space with an all-weather and mulch surface. Access to the outdoor play area is from the pre-school room. A slide, a large play centre and small toy kitchen was noted.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Parents provide the snacks for children attending the service. The designated person in charge informed the inspector the service had commenced engagement with the Bia Blasta (Delicious food) programme to provide a variety of healthy and nutritious snacks to children on a Monday to Friday basis.

At 11:00 children enjoyed a snack of various fruits, crackers, rolls, sandwiches, pancakes and yoghurts with milk or water to drink.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods. The service fridge record temperature was recorded at 4 degrees Celsius.

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 to the service was secure which ensured no unauthorised entry. Access to the service is via a bell system for entry. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Monthly hazard checklists for the indoor environment were reviewed. An outdoor play area checklist was noted.

Infection Control:

Children washed their hands before the snack and after using the toilet.

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Toys and equipment were easily cleanable.

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Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation.

The temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 28.2 degrees Celsius.

Windows provided natural ventilation in the playroom. Mechanical ventilation was working in the sanitary accommodation. Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was stored inaccessible to children and was available if a child should get a high temperature. No medication was given at the time of the inspection. A health care plan was available for children with a defined medical condition.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted to the side of the service.

Outing:

The designated person in charge stated the service does not undertake outings.

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.

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Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

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)

Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A fully equipped first aid box was located in the pre-school room. A checklist was in place noting the expiry dates of the first aid items.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the service.

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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 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 26 May 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in December 2025 and in May 2026 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

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 review which covered the number of children attending the service and was valid until the 25 February 2027.

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Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- The service complaints policy was available and reviewed. The relevant details in respect of (a)(b)(c) were noted in the policy.
- (2)(a)(b)
- Records indicate that the service held information in respect of (a) and (b).
- (3)(a)(b)
- The records were available for review by the Inspector.