

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022MN002
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Name of Service:	Rockcorry Community Preschool
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Address of Service:	Cootehill Road, Rockcorry, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	H18 FD93
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karren McKeown Brady
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	4	PM	-
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Rockcorry Community Preschool has been operating as a community run childcare service since 2022. The service provides a sessional service to pre-school children aged 2 – 6 years. The service operates from 09:30 -12:30 each weekday and caters for a maximum of 22 pre-school children.

The service is conducted from a classroom in the local primary school in the village of Rockcorry Co. Monaghan. The service has 1 care room, sanitary facilities and a kitchenette area. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were 6 staff employed in the service. Five of these staff worked directly with the preschool children and 1 was employed as a student.

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 registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non -

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 co-operation of the 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,*

(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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a system in place to designate a named deputy person to deputise as required. The deputy person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

There were 6 staff files presented for inspection.

(2)(a) & (b)

- There were 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for all members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members and 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) Following a review of the staff files presented on the day of inspection, 2 international police vetting documents were available for the staff member who had resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of greater than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the 5 members of staff who worked directly with the pre-school children held at least the minimum required Level 5 Childcare Qualification and letters of equivalence. A qualification was not required for the student.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the early years' service.
- (3) The adult to child ratios were correct.
- The following adult to child ratios were observed by the inspector on the day of inspection:
- There were 4 children aged between 3 - 4 years being cared for by 1 staff member. A student was also present 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

- There was 1 care room in operation on the day of the inspection: the Preschool Room.
- (1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service:
- BASIC NEEDS:**
- The children had free movement in the care room and were dressed appropriately in wet suits and wellies to facilitate having a change of environment to the outdoor play area.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- All children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting. Any child in a nappy was respectfully offered the opportunity to have their nappy checked. Discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required and gentle handwashing reminders were given to the children after toileting.
- Lunches were brought in by the children and consisted of crackers, eggs, fruit and yoghurt drinks. They had access to their drinks. Staff were observed to sit with the children when having their lunch and engaging in conversations with the children about the visit of a baby lamb to the service the following day.
- There was a tissue station accessible to the children to promote independence in blowing their noses.

Supporting relationship around children

- A key worker system was in operation with specific children assigned to a particular staff member.
- Communication between the parents and staff was informal, at drop off and pick-up. The staff member also stated that an electronic application was used in the service to communicate with the parents, record observations and send photographs to the parents.
- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff members for example *"good job"* and *"oh you're a great counter"*.
- A child who hurt themselves was observed to be comforted and nursed by a staff member.
- Transitions between activities were smooth. Five-minute time warnings were given prior to clean up time and songs were sung to encourage participation in clean up.
- A child who did not want to partake in circle time was afforded the opportunity to play with their chosen toy at another area.

Physical and Material Environment

- A variety of age-appropriate toys and equipment were available in the care room on low level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children.
- There were resourced defined interest areas for example the home corner, dress up rail, a plastic tray with a dough and glitter mix, book area and farm area. There was also a sensory basket.

Programme Of Activities.

- A daily routine and evidence of planning was on display in the room.
- Artwork on display included leaf and paper plate art.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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-

(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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was a soft comfortable area in the room which consisted of a large leather armchair with a soft throw, a floor mat and some small child size plastic covered sofas.

(2)(a) There was an outdoor area to the rear of the premises which was fully enclosed with fencing and a tarmacked area with a movable fence section. The outdoor area consisted of a selection of different surfaces. A new sensory garden with safety surface, rocker toys, a large seesaw, mud kitchen and spinning seat. There were gravel pathways around and running through the garden and there was a bug hotel, a barked area with planting tyres, wooden climbing frame, musical pipes and water shoots.

The children had also access to a polly-tunnel which was observed to be used on the day for digging. There was also another grass and tarmacked area which had some picnic benches.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access to the building and to prevent children exiting the service unsupervised.
- Designated emergency exit doors remained clear free from obstruction.
- Cleaning materials and equipment were stored out of the reach.

Infection Control:

- Lunches which were brought in by the children were stored appropriately in the fridge.
- Hands were washed after toileting, messy play, before lunch and after coming in from outside.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A laptop lead was on a low-level shelf and accessible to the children this is a potential injury hazard.
2. There were several unprotected sharp corners on low-level storage units, worktop and tables. These are a potential injury risk.
3. There was an electric heater free standing on the small fridge, accessible to the children. This was a potential impact hazard.

Infection Control:

The following infection control and cross contamination risks were identified on inspection:

4. There was no hot water in either of the taps in the sanitary accommodations. This does not allow for effective hand washing.
5. The nappy changing mat was inappropriately stored between the side of the worktop and a shelving unit in the main care room.
6. The pedal operated bin for soiled nappies did not have a bin liner in it.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The laptop was removed from the room on the same day.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Staff were informed that leads have to be secured when they use a laptop or similar device again.

2. All sharp corners on tables and shelves were covered with corner protectors the following day.

Checking all units for corner protectors has been added to the daily risk assessment checklist.

3. The heater has been secured with fastening tape.

Checking to ensure devices are securely attached has been added to the risk assessment.

Infection Control:

4. The hot water problem has been rectified, the hot water boiler has been fixed, and all taps have hot water again. The registered provider has spoken to the school and a plumber was called immediately to fix the problem.

5. The nappy changing mat has been moved to a new place. It is now stored in the bathroom.

Staff are to keep the nappy changing mat in the new bathroom location.

6. Bin liners have been added to the bins immediately. Putting bin liners into the bins has been added to the daily checklist for the preschool room.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence and copy of Daily Risk Assessment.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response, assurances given and supporting documentation. The non-compliances in Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be for review at the next inspection.

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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service and were carried out monthly, the last recorded 10/2/25.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarm dated 9/12/24.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

There was stagnant water in the sink in the children's sanitary accommodation as it was not draining away.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The blockage in the sink was unblocked following the inspection.

Checking the sinks for blockages has been added to the daily risk assessment checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and copy of Daily Risk Assessment.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted by the Inspectorate, the non-compliance has been addressed