

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC080 |
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| Name of Service: | Newtownshandrum Community Playschool CLG |
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| Address of Service: | Newtownshandrum, Charleville, Co. Cork |
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| Eircode: | P56 EE63 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Maria Shanahan |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date(s) of Inspection: | 14/10/2025 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 22 | PM | N/A |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|

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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick. |
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| Inspection undertaken by: | F Collins |
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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).

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| Conditions if applicable | Not applicable |
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Description of service

Newtownshandrum Community Playschool CLG is a sessional service located in the village of Newtownshandrum, in North Cork. The service is located in a prefabricated building on the premises of the primary school. There were 22 children present on the day of inspection.

The service is registered to provide a sessional service to children aged between two and six years and facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme.

The service is open from Monday to Friday between 09:00 and 12:30 hours and is open for 38 weeks of the year.

A registered school age service is also provided on the premises in a different room.

The premise is a detached, single storey prefabricated structure with two care rooms of which one room is used for the pre-school. The premises were constructed for the purpose of providing a pre-school service.

Staffing

The service had two staff who work directly with the children, both of whom have been working in the service for many years. There is a named person who can attend the service should the need for relief be 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

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 (1) (2)(c)

Regulation 10

Regulation 11 (1) (2)

Regulation 15 (1)

Regulation 19 (1)(a)

Regulation 23

Regulation 25

Regulation 26

Regulation 28

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, deputy person in charge 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-

- (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,*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the named person in charge. The registered provider was in the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(b) The roster indicated that the registered provider was onsite during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clear management structure identified in the service, with the registered provider and the deputy person in charge. A relief staff member was also named should her assistance be required.

(2) There were two staff employed in the service and a relief staff member. All three staff files were assessed on the previous inspection and therefore only the Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed.

(c) Renewed Garda vetting was available for all three staff who may work in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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 two policies were reviewed and were in line with best practice:

- The infection control policy, inclusive of the procedures to follow for unvaccinated children in the service.
- The complaints 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 adequate staff working in the service during the inspection to meet the needs of the children in attendance.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained. There were two adults working directly with twenty-two children attending the sessional service on the day of inspection.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a)-(i) Ten children's records were reviewed and all ten records contained the required information as outlined above in (a)-(i).

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 service promoted healthy eating. The snacks were provided by parents/guardians and evidence of the healthy eating policy was observed where food included sandwiches, crackers, cheese, yogurts, fruit and vegetables and drinks of water. The staff were observed to assist the children as required.
- Children were able to go to the toilet independently but those that required assistance were given help.
- Any child who required assistance with hand washing was supported with same and all children were prompted to wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet.
- Children who opted out of activities were observed to sit with their peers at a table away from the other children and had access to books if they chose same.
- Children were allowed to choose their activities, inclusive of art activities, tabletop activities and activities that allowed for imaginary play by using the kitchen. The staff moved about to support the children but allowed the children to choose their activities and play with whom they wished.
- The children's mobility was not hindered at any time, and the children could move about freely.

Supporting Relationships Around Children

- The children were familiar with the adults who worked in the service and the children were comfortable with them, named them by name and sought out their assistance as required.
- The adults were relaxed when speaking with the children and there were no raised voices noted during the inspection.
- The staff appeared to work well together and were supportive of each other.
- Staff operated in partnership with parents as observed with the conversations had at drop off.

Physical And Material Environment:

- The indoor environment consisted of one care room. The room had child height tables and chairs where the children were observed to eat and do their arts and crafts, and other tabletop activities. There were open shelving units that were accessible to the children and at their height, which allowed the children to be independent in their activities.
- There was a supply of varied equipment such as arts and crafts, building activities such as blocks and magnetic bricks, and shape sorters as an example for fine motor development. Imaginary games were played with kitchens, garages and home equipment.
- The service demonstrated a language rich environment with stories being told, and where children needed to respond. Children were spoken to in small groups as they completed their activities and in the large group when singing, dancing and playing group games.

The Outdoor Environment:

The outdoor environment was a shared space with the primary school. The children played games at the painted clock and ran and jumped around. The time outside was cut short on the day of inspections due to rain.

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 service was secured by a locked door to the front.
- The outdoor play area was supervised when in use and the gate was closed to the side with a lever handle but was not locked. The yard was secured by high fencing all around. This ensured the safety of the children and prevented access by unauthorised adults.
- The windows were secured and could not be reached by the children.
- The blind cords were secured to the wall at one side of the care room and were tied up high at the other side.
- There was no staircase in the service.
- All toys and equipment observed on the day of inspection were in good condition and free from any pinch or crush points.
- There was no heavy furniture observed that was at a height that could tip over on to the children.
- The electric flexes observed were in good condition and out of reach of the children.

- The storage facilities were inaccessible to the children.
- There were no hot drinks consumed during the operation of the service.
- There was no kettle accessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The children were observed to wash their hands before snack time and after using the toilet reducing the possibility of cross infection.
- There was hot water accessible in all of the sinks that was thermostatically controlled. The hot water in the children's toilets was recorded at 35.2 and 35.6 °C respectively. There was liquid hand soap and paper towels available for use by the children. There was also hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels in the adult's toilet.
- The perishable items contained in the snacks provided to the service by parents/guardians were stored in the fridge following arrival and before snack time preventing the perishable items from spoiling.
- The tables where the children were eating were cleaned with appropriate disinfectant prior to the children having their snack.
- School bags were stored off the ground on shelving and this prevented contamination.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider stated that no medication had been administered in the service.

Safe Sleep:

- Children do not sleep in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit door was not obstructed by furniture during the operation of the service.

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) The registered provider ensured that at all times when the service was operating there was a person onsite with first aid training (FAR Training). Two staff working in the service had up to date FAR training

(2) (a) There was an equipped first aid box on the premises and this was stored in the kitchen.

(b) The box was easily accessible to use if required.

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) The registered provider ensured that a record was maintained of all fire drills that took place on the premises, the last fire drill took place on 18.09.2025.
- (b) The record of maintenance for the firefighting equipment was available and was completed in November 2024. The record of the type and maintenance of the smoke alarms was available, and this was last completed on 17/06/2025.
- (4) There was an evacuation procedure notice displayed in the hallway 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 service was insured to cater for 22 children in a sessional service. The insurance was in date until 27/03/2026.