

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC170
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Gortroe Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Gortroe, Youghal, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	P36 R520
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Louise Cronin Fox
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/05/2023
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	13	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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## Description of service

Gortroe Pre-School is a play-based setting, that is registered to cater for children aged two to six years. The sessional service is provided from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks annually, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

The service is situated in the rural village of Gortroe, near Youghal in Co. Cork and operates from a room within the local community centre. Children's sanitary facilities are provided adjoining the care room and the outdoor play space is directly accessible from the same room. Staff sanitary facilities are also available, as well as a kitchen.

## Staffing

There are currently three adults employed by the service, all of whom work directly with the children, including the registered provider. One adult is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. All three staff members have completed major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications.

## 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 the child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspections 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-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 member 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*

*(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.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The designated person in charge of operating the childcare service was the registered provider, who had also appointed a named deputy. Written information to this effect was displayed in the care room and was outlined within the service's policies and procedures.
- (b) The registered provider was available at the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that one adult had commenced working at the service since the previous inspection was undertaken on 30 April 2021. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to this adult were reviewed, along with the qualifications of all staff members.
- Two written and suitably validated references were available as follows:
- (a) One of the references in place was from a past employer.
- (b) The second reference was from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was on file in respect of the adult.
- (d) Police vetting was not deemed to be required, as the adult had not resided outside of the State for 6 consecutive months, or longer, while over the age of 18.
- (4) Copies of qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education, were available for the three staff members.

### 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 an adequate number of adults were consistently available to the children.

(3) The adult child ratio met the requirements of the regulation. There were 13 pre-school children, aged 3 to 5 years, present on the morning of inspection and 2 adults were responsible for their direct care and supervision.

## 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) There were 18 children enrolled at the service. A sample of 11 children's registration forms were reviewed and found to include the requirements listed from (a) through to (i).

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

#### Compliance Information

(1)

(h) Child attendance records were documented within a role book and were updated daily.

## 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:

- A mid-morning snack was facilitated during the sessional service. This was conducted at a relaxed pace and the adults provided appropriate assistance to the children, where required. The registered provider confirmed that the children could be accommodated to have their snacks outside of the designated mealtime, should they become hungry.
- The children's reusable water bottles were stored on a low-level shelf in the care room, which ensured that liquids were freely and consistently accessible.
- The children were observed to independently access the adjoining sanitary facility throughout the morning, with adults available nearby to offer verbal prompts.
- A cosy corner was included within the care room, for any child who may wish to opt out of scheduled activities or take some time to relax.
- Boxes of tissues were available within the children's reach and children were noted to independently retrieve tissues, as necessary.
- During non-structured activities, the children could move freely between the indoor and outdoor environments and engage in their chosen pursuits.
- When minor conflicts arose among the children, the adults were noted to respond in a sensitive and patient manner, by adopting a calm speaking voice and discussing the disagreement with the children.

## Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- An adequate amount of waist height tables and low-level chairs were provided for the children’s use indoors and seating was also accessible in the outdoor play space.
- The care room was suitably resourced with age-appropriate interest items, which were stored on low set shelving, at the children’s eye level:
  - Examples included jigsaws, counting games, Montessori equipment, connectable shapes, threading materials and plastic bricks.
  - The home corner was furnished with a wooden play kitchen and utensils.
  - In an adjacent area, the children had the use of a doctor’s station, with doctor’s instruments.
  - A mark making area was equipped with paper, pencils, crayons, markers and scissors, along with a pull-out drawer unit, which was stocked with additional art and craft supplies.
- The well-developed outdoor play environment comprised a combination of gravel, artificial grass and concrete surfaces. The majority of interest areas were under the cover of a perspex roof, which allowed for their use in wet weather conditions. Play spaces and equipment included:
  - A gravel box, with a sit-on digger, hand held vehicles and hard hats
  - A new climbing frame, a wooden bridge and a free-standing slide
  - A large wall mounted blackboard
  - A tuft tray with artificial grass, barn houses and farm animal figures
  - Connectable waffle shapes
  - A mud kitchen, equipped with pots and pans
  - A basketball hoop and balls

### 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

- The Healthy Eating policy in place was appropriate for the category of service provided.
- The children’s snacks were supplied by their parents or guardians. On the day of inspection, examples included sandwiches, crackers, filled wraps, rice cakes, yogurts, sliced cucumber and fruit such as bananas, oranges and passionfruit.
- Drinking water was available throughout the children’s attendance.
- The registered provider advised the inspector that none of the children had any specific dietary requirements or food allergies.

### 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 door to the care room was found to be secure upon the inspector’s unannounced arrival, which reduced the risk of unauthorised access. On the interior, a thumb turn lock was in place, along with a door sensor alarm, which sounded when the door was opened. This minimised the risk of a child exiting the service, while unsupervised.
- A combination of high-level fencing, a secured gate and the building walls enclosed the outdoor play area.
- The first aid cabinet was wall mounted out of the children’s reach.
- A storage cupboard, located in the care room was maintained secure when not in use, with the key placed on a high-level wall hook.
- Firefighting equipment was wall mounted.
- Radiator covers were provided to reduce the risk of a child sustaining a scald injury.
- The blind cord on the fire exit door was safely secured.

### Infection Control:

- Warm running water was available at the children's wash hand basins, along with liquid soap, paper towel dispensers and foot pedal operated bins, all of which supported the practice of hygienic handwashing and drying. The children were observed to wash their hands before eating their snacks and after using the toilet facilities, with regular reminders provided by the adults.
- The children's coats and bags were suitably stored on wall hooks, outside the care room.
- Tables were sanitised before and after the meal break.
- The door to the outdoor play space remained open throughout the morning, which ensured a supply of natural ventilation.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered at the time of inspection.
- The registered provider stated that no child was currently in receipt of medication.

### Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were noted to sleep while in attendance.

### Fire Safety:

- No fire safety concerns were noted.

### Outings:

- The registered provider advised that an annual outing was typically conducted and a suitable Outings policy had been developed.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

1. The children's sanitary facility was not maintained in a clean condition, which posed a risk of cross infection; cobwebs were visible above the window, near the ceiling and behind the toilets, there was an accumulation of dirt on the skirting board and door frames and there was a toilet seat insert on the floor, beside one of toilets.
2. Refrigerated storage was not provided for the children's perishable snacks, such as yogurts and ham sandwiches, which increased the risk of food spoilage. All of the children's lunches were stored in a cooler box in the hall area. This was at variance with the service's Healthy Eating policy, which stated that:  
*Lunches will be placed in the fridge upon arrival.*
3. Warm running water, required for effective handwashing, was unavailable at the wash hand basin the staff toilet facility. A water temperature reading of 14.7°C was recorded.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. The sanitary area has been thoroughly cleaned. The window, vents, skirting boards and door frame have been cleaned. One of the children had placed the seat minimiser on the floor, staff have explained to the children that this must stay on the seat. Staff will monitor toilets more regularly throughout the morning, to ensure the seat insert stays on the toilet. All areas of the sanitary area will be cleaned daily.
2. On the day of the inspection, staff forgot to put the lunches into the fridge. This was an error on the day, due to accommodating the inspection and organising the session. Lunches are always placed in a box in the hall, on the children's arrival and then transferred into the fridge by staff. Staff will ensure lunches are always placed in the fridge once all children have arrived.
3. The switch for the hot water was not turned on, on the day of inspection and this was not noticed, as the staff had not used the toilet facility. The registered provider will ensure that the hot water is switched on every morning, prior to the session.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### Infection Control:

1. Photographic evidence was forwarded.
2. & 3. The statements from the registered provider are accepted as evidence.

### Summary Comment

The corrective actions implemented by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 23.

### 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 firefighting 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 of the fire drills carried out at the service was available on file. The most recently undertaken fire drill was dated 24 April 2023 .
  - (b) The service had a list of the number and type of the available firefighting equipment. Maintenance records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 18 November 2022 and the wired smoke alarm was tested on 17 November 2022 .
  - (4) A notice, which outlined the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire, was displayed on a notice board in the care room.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated
  - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

#### Compliance Information

- (c)
- In the care room, natural light was provided through two windows and a glass panelled door. This was supplemented with artificial fluorescent and LED ceiling lights, with protective covers. The adjoining sanitary facility also had a combination of natural and artificial LED lighting.
  - Oil fired heating was in place at the service. The air temperature of the care room was recorded at 19.9°C and a reading of 18.2°C was taken in the children's sanitary facility.

- Openable windows were available in the care room and there was also an openable door between the care room and the outdoor play area. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the staff sanitary facility.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (c) A musty malodour was evident in the children's sanitary facility and it was noted that the window in this area remained closed throughout the morning.
- (d) The door to the outdoor play space was not maintained in a proper state of repair. There was square shaped hole at the bottom of the door, where an air vent had previously been inserted.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (c) As the building is old, the musty odour sometimes gets worse in hot weather. Staff will ensure the window is kept open daily, to increase ventilation.
- (d) The vent attached to the door of the preschool had fallen off the bracket the day before the inspection. A temporary cover had been placed over the hole, which was in place the day of inspection and for 24 hours. The vent cover was repaired on 17th May. The registered provider will ensure that the vent is always fitted correctly and does not fall off.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (c) The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.
- (d) A photograph to demonstrate that the vent has been replaced.

### Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was assessed and accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.