

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE030
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Name of Service:	Cois Ceim Creche
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Address of Service:	Rathbaun, Lisdoonvarna, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 HV59
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Urquahart
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	02/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	41
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Child & Family Agency, Primary Care Building, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Hayes & A. McCarthy
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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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Description of service

Cois Céim creche was established in 2008 as a full day care, part time and sessional community service in Lisdoonvarna, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 and cares for pre-school children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is located in a single storey building with childcare provided in six care rooms all of which were in operation on 02 March 2026. Children have access to a separate sleep room in the service. A kitchen, a dining room and a staff room are also available on the premises. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the front and sides of the premises and is divided for the different age groups of children.

Staffing

The registered provider is the chairperson of the management committee for the service and is not involved in the day-to-day operation. On the 02 March 2026 the manager and assistant manager, one auxiliary staff member who prepares, cooks and serves the meals and 15 adults who worked directly with the children were present. During the inspection the manager provided an administrative role and relief cover in the care rooms during breaktime. One additional adult cared for the school age children who were present on the day.

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 and premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

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

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 29 – Premises (e)

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 inspectors wish 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*

(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 service manager was the person in charge and a named person was available to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the service manager was present.

(2)

Twenty files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider and the adults employed by the service

(a)

Thirty references with evidence of validation were sourced from a past employer.

(b)

Ten references with evidence of validation were obtained from sources other than past employers.

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(c)

Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the registered provider and the adults employed to work at the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for five adults who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

Police vetting was not available for three adults who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than six consecutive months as an adult. The safety of children attending the service cannot be ensured, when all vetting procedures are not carried out prior to allowing adults access to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

All relevant staff members are in the process of obtaining the required international police vetting, and the service is actively working to ensure that all staff vetting is completed as soon as possible. Two staff members are currently following up on their applications, and one staff member is in the process of finalising and submitting the application.

Going forward, the service will ensure that all vetting requirements, including international police clearance are fully completed and received before any adult is permitted access to children in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

None

Summary Comment

Copies of the completed International Police vetting for three adults have not been submitted to the inspectorate to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to Regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

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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 with the children on the day of the inspection

(2)

On the 02 March 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Fifteen adults cared for the 57 children in attendance in the morning and 12 adults cared for 41 children in the afternoon. An additional adult was also available to cover staff breaks and the service manager carried out administration duties and was also available to assist in the care rooms if required.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the childcare facility at all times

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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 of Children:

The adults treated the children in a respectful manner, and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults praised and encouraged the children, conversed with the children at their level, used soft tones of voice, and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The adults supervised and treated the children in a respectful manner during nappy changes and toileting. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care and were supported by the adults when assistance was required.

The children's sleep was attended to on an individual basis, and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep.

The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided at mealtimes which were observed to be relaxed and sociable occasions. Meals were prepared and cooked at the service. Drinks of water were freely available to children throughout the day in each room. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area for play based activities and transitioned to a dining room for meals.

Physical and Material Environment:

The six care rooms were bright, colourful and resourced according to the ages of the children attending each room. The rooms were appropriately furnished with low level tables, chairs and shelving accessible to the children. Designated areas to include wooden pretend play kitchens, art stations, construction areas were resourced and accessible to the children with a range of supporting materials and equipment. The low-level shelving units stored a range of challenging opportunities for the children and facilitated child led play opportunities. Designated areas with soft furnishings to include couches, cushions, mats and shelving with reading materials were used by the children to rest and relax. The care rooms were child friendly with visual displays of the children's individual

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artwork, personal interests, multicultural displays, and family and birthday displays. Individual learning journals were available demonstrating the activities that the children had engaged in during the pre-school year.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Physical and Material Environment:

The outdoor play area was not sufficiently resourced with toys and play and educational based materials and equipment to support all children's learning and development.

- The outdoor play area to the front of the premises was used by the pre-school children during the day and had a very limited amount of play equipment available for use. The children brought toys from the indoor playroom to the outdoor play area. A limited quantity of toys for outdoor use was stored in a cabin which was inaccessible to the children.
- The grassy play area to the side of the premises was overgrown and the wooden stationary play items were worn and broken.

This non-compliance was previously identified on inspection dated 01 July 2025 and the corrective and preventive actions outlined by the service following inspection were not implemented and the non-compliance has reoccurred.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

The service is carrying out a full review of the outdoor play environment with support from an Early Years Quality Specialist to ensure it better supports children's learning and development. Suppliers have been contacted and we are in the process of purchasing additional equipment to increase the range of play opportunities. We expect this review and the introduction of new resources to be completed over the coming weeks, with all improvements in place within 6-8 weeks.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions taken will address the non-compliance under Regulation 19(1)(a).

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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:

On inspection the following was observed:

The entrance door was appropriately secured with a magnetic lock to prevent children from accessing unsafe areas or allowing unsupervised access to the building.

The front entrance gate to the service had a high level three-point access system fitted.

The highchairs used by the younger children if required at mealtimes were in good condition and fitted with safety harnesses.

The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.

The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service on the childcare electronic application system.

Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Completed cleaning schedules were available demonstrating measures taken by staff to clean and maintain the service.

The sanitary facilities were equipped with liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.

Thermostatically controlled hot water was available to support hygienic hand washing by the children and staff.

The water temperatures were recorded at varying temperatures ranging from 21.9° Celsius to 33.2° Celsius.

Suitable nappy changing areas were available, and a nappy changing procedure was clearly displayed on the wall close to the change mats.

The children were supported by staff to wash their hands at appropriate intervals such as after activities, using the toilet and outdoor play and before mealtime.

Administration of Medication:

The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication policy and procedure.

Documentation was available for the adults to record medication administered to the children in attendance

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Safe Sleep:

A safe sleep policy was in place at the service and the adults demonstrated an awareness of the policy and adhered to the best practise sleep guidelines for all children under 2 years of age.

Standard sized cots and beds were used.

The children's sleep observations were recorded by the adults every 10 minutes on the electronic records. These observations included the children's colour, position and breathing.

Low level beds with individual blankets and bedlinen were available for the older children who required sleep.

An electronic thermometer was available for the adults to measure and monitor the room temperatures.

Fire Safety:

The adults had evidence on file of up-to-date fire safety training.

The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.

The fire exits routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.

A fire action notice was displayed at all the fire exit points in the building.

The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

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.

Compliance Information

(e)

The children had access to sanitary facilities adjacent to the care rooms. The children's sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with eleven child sized toilets and eleven wash hand basins.

The three nappy changing facilities within the service were equipped with 4 nappy changing mats. Nappy changing procedures were displayed in each of these areas.

Two sanitary facilities were available for use by the adults.