

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE031

Name of Service: Connolly Pre-School

Address of Service: Connolly, Ennis, Co. Clare

Eircode: V95 RY92

Name of Registered Provider: Susan Vaughan

Service type: Part Time

Date of Inspection: 16/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Quality and Regulation Directorate, Tusla, Ennis Primary Care Centre, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
Inspection undertaken by:	J Hayes
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

This service was first notified in 2001. The part time service is a community based service managed by a local voluntary committee and is provided from a classroom in Connolly Primary School. It can cater for up to a maximum number of 17 pre-school children, between the ages of 2 years and 6 years. The service is open Monday-Friday 09.00hrs - 14.00hrs.

Staffing

There are two adults employed in the service and an additional adult available for relief cover. The registered provider is not involved in the day to day running of the service.

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 and safety. The inspection focused on the examination of compliance under the following 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 28- Insurance

Regulation 29 Premises

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.

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)

On the day of the inspection, the service manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present on the premises. The staff roster indicated that the designated person or her deputy were always available on site.

(2)

Four files were available for the registered provider and adults employed by the service which included an adult available for relief cover. These files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(a)

Five references with evidence of validation were available from past employers.

(b)

Three references with evidence of validation were available from sources other than past employers.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect all adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(d)

Not applicable as no adult had lived outside the state for a period greater than six months.

(4)

The two adults working directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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)

During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children who attended the service.

(2)

An adequate number of adults cared for the children at all times during the inspection. On the 16 September 2025 two adults cared for the six children attending the service.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. One care room was in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions with the children. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner. The adults used soft tones of voice and conversed with the children at their level and listened attentively during conversations. The adults responded promptly to the children's cues for assistance. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the children's individual preferences, interests and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities were facilitated with ease, the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of activities.

The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time. Individually designed areas were provided for the children in the indoor area with soft furnishings and reading materials and used by the children periodically to rest and relax. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable period whereby the children and adults conversed amicably. Suitable age-appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided during mealtime. The children's parents provided nutritious foods, and water was freely available and accessible at all times.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor environment offered an enriching and challenging experience for the children in attendance. The care room and the adjacent outdoor area were bright, spacious and appropriately resourced for the age range and developmental level of the children. The room was laid out with designated interest areas, using natural, open-

ended materials and equipment. The room was individually designed with displays of colourful artwork, individual creative pieces, numeracy, learning and literacy aids. Family photos were displayed in the room at the children's eye level to support children's sense of belonging in the service.

The outdoor play area was well resourced and offered an inviting and challenging space for the children to freely explore and engage in a range of sensory, creative, physical, imaginative, constructive and gross motor activities. The outdoor play area was accessed through the school yard and to the rear of the school.

Waterproof clothing and footwear were available for the children for outdoor play during wet weather conditions. The children were observed to be offered choice in relation to their play preferences and thoroughly enjoy the range of activities provided.

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:

- A key coded, bell operated system was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children and visitors to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- The outdoor areas are checked by adults to ensure they are safe prior to use each day.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
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Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were in place for the premises.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins. Photographic illustrations of hand hygiene techniques were displayed over the wash hand basins to prompt children to wash their hands.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, after using the toilet and on return from outdoor play and before mealtime.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually in containers.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The adults demonstrated an understanding of the administration of medication policy.
- Documentation was available for the adults to use should medication be administered in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction in the service.
- Written records of completed monthly fire drills were available.
- Fire assembly points were readily identifiable and identified by the adults working in the service.

Outing:

- The adults advised that an outing is undertaken every year with the children and a risk assessment, and an outings checklist are completed prior to the outing.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's outings policy and procedure.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for fifty-five pre-school children. The insurance policy for the part time service is valid until the 27 March 2026

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) There were no issues identified in relation to visual structure of the premises.
- (b) Access to the service was secured through the provision of a bell and keypad system.
- (c) During the inspection the service was adequately lit by natural and artificial sources of light. The care room and sanitary facilities were ventilated by natural means of ventilation. The room temperatures were maintained within the recommended levels of 18°Celsius to 22°Celsius. The care room temperature was recorded as 19.5°Celsius.
- (d) The indoor and outdoor environment was maintained in clean and hygienic condition.
- (e) An adequate number of suitably equipped sanitary and nappy changing facilities were available for the adults working in the service and the children in attendance.
 - Two toilets and two hand wash basins were available for use by the children.
 - One toilet and one wash hand basin were available for use by the adults.
 - One nappy changing unit, a changing mat and a wash hand basin were available for use for children in nappies.