

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015CE057

**Name of Service:** Hurlers Cross Playschool

**Address of Service:** Clonmoney National School, Clonmoney, Newmarket-on-Fergus, Co. Clare

**Eircode:** V14 DC92

**Name of Registered Provider:** Annemarie Griffin

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date(s) of Inspection:** 01/04/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	N/A
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**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** 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

### Description of service

The service is registered to provide a sessional service for children aged 2 – 6 years, Monday–Friday, 08:45 – 11:45hrs for 38 weeks of the year, including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme for eligible children. This service operates from a single storey prefabricated unit located on the grounds of Clonmoney National school, Newmarket On-Fergus, Co Clare.

The children have access to a playroom, bathroom facilities for the adults and children, a hallway and an enclosed outdoor space located at the back of the service. The children have access to an all-weather surface on the school premises.

### Staffing

There are four adults including the registered provider working directly with the children each day. The adults hold an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

There are two additional adults available as emergency relief if 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, and safety,.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

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

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. General safety.

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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, adults 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 registered provider was the person in charge, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider was available throughout the inspection.

(2)(a)

Nine of the twelve references in respect of six adults were from past employers.

(b)

Three of the twelve references in respect of six adults were available from a source other than a past employer.

- (c)  
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the registered provider and all adults employed by the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of one adult. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)  
International police vetting was not required as none of the adults working in the service had lived outside the State.
- (4)  
The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 5 to Level 8 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.*
- (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 1 April 2025, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.
- (3)  
The registered provider ensured that the adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. Four adults worked directly with fourteen children during the inspection.

### 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 inspector observed that the children's learning, development, and well-being was supported by the adults. The adults interacted in a kind manner with the children, responded to their individual needs promptly and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the session. The adults cared for the children in a sensitive manner and responded promptly to the children's cues for comfort. The children were supported to be independent in play, during toileting, caring for their personal belongings and at mealtime. The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions, and the adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the children's individual preferences and capabilities. The children were supported in accordance with their preference on an individual level and as part of the group. Speech and sound development was promoted by all the adults during conversations and through games played. The adults and children sat together during mealtime in the play room. This was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion and the adults modelled positive social behaviours.

##### Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments were bright, spacious and suitably resourced for the age range and developmental needs of the children in attendance. The children were observed to thoroughly enjoy the indoor activities and they moved to the outdoor area after lunch.

The children were provided with opportunities to engage in open ended, play based tabletop and floor-based activities. These activities included imaginative, sensorial, manipulative, constructive and creative play. After mealtime the children transitioned to the rest area in the playroom where story time and discussions took place. This area consisted of soft leatherette seating with a floor rug and a well-resourced library.

The playroom offered a large range of enriching experiences and resources and was laid out with low level shelving, tables and chairs that were accessible to the children. The areas of interest in the room included: table and floor-based activities which facilitated children to be in smaller groups for play activities. Additional inviting

areas included: reading/library areas, construction play areas, home corner, messy area, puzzles, manipulative play areas, small world areas and a dress up area. The walls in the playroom displayed visual learning aids for the children and their art and craft activities.

An enclosed outdoor play area with a grass surface was located to the rear of the building, offering a well-developed space for the children to freely engage in physical, imaginative and creative play. The area had clearly defined interest areas. There was space for climbing and opportunities for challenge and safe risk. The children were observed enjoying the various activities available in the outdoor space such as the mud kitchen, timber houses, timber frame for climbing and creative play, balance beams, large rubber tyres and the planting area. The provision of an overhead shelter ensured the outdoor space could be accessed in all weathers throughout the year. The children also had daily access to the school yard for play opportunities with the ride on toys and other gross motor activities.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for the adults employed by the service, however, vetting disclosures in respect of two adults were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

The vetting disclosure application was renewed in respect of one adult and the second adult is no longer working in the service and had not worked there since June 2023.

A reminder has been added to the service electronic application on the work phone to issue notifications when garda vetting is due for renewal.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

The renewed Garda vetting disclosure document was submitted to the early years inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

Based on the corrective actions and supporting evidence the area of non-compliance is addressed under Regulation 23 General Safety.

## 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)  
Three adults had a record of up-to-date First Aid Response training.
- (2)(a)  
A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a readily accessible position within the playroom.
- (b)  
The first aid box was available for use by the adults at all times should it be required for the children attending the service.

### 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)

Records were available to demonstrate that fire drills were carried out on a monthly basis in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 3 March 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place, respectively on 24 March 2025 and 28 August 2024.

(4)

Fire action notices were available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire

### 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 children attending the service. The policy indicated valid insurance cover until the 27 March 2026.