

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE100		
Name of Service:	Ms. Grainne's Childcare Centre LTD		
Address of Service:	Holy Family National School, Station Road, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 YR79		
Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Kelly		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM 23
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy		
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

Ms. Grainne's Childcare Centre LTD was established in 2006, on the grounds of the Holy Family National School, in Ennis town centre. The service is registered as operating Monday to Friday. Two sessional programmes of care are provided from 09:00 to 12:00 and 12:00 to 15:00. A part-times service is facilitated from 09:00 to 14:00 for children aged between two to six years.

The programme of care is facilitated in two prefabricated structures. The first prefabricated structure accommodates one open plan room called the Sun care room. Two care rooms are located in the second prefabricated structure. These are called the Moon care room and the Stars care room. A sensory room is located adjacent to both care rooms in the second prefabricated structure. A small outdoor play area is attached to the rear of first prefabricated structure which is used by the children on a rostered basis.

Staffing

Thirteen adults and a student on work placement are currently working in the service. On the 26 November 2025 the registered provider, an administrative support person, a student and eleven adults worked directly with the children in attendance. The registered provider currently provides a managerial role in the service. The adults working directly with the children held appropriate qualifications 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 child and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (3), (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 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, the members of 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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

Fourteen files were available for review in respect of the registered provider, twelve employees and a student on work placement. The findings included the following:

- (a)
Sixteen of the twenty-eight required references from a past employer were available.
- (b)
Eleven of the twenty-eight required references from a source other than a past employer were available.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 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)
International police vetting was not required for thirteen of the fourteen adults working in the service as these adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (4)
The adults working directly with the children held an Early Childhood Care and Education qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 or an equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b)
 1. A written and validated reference in respect of one adult was not available.
 2. Three past employer references in respect of two adults were not validated.
 3. Two references obtained from a source other than a past employer in respect of two adults were not validated.
- (d)
The police vetting in respect of one adult was not translated by a certified translator and the outcome could not be determined.
- (3)
The vetting procedures required from paragraph (2) were not carried out on all the adults working in the service prior to adults commencing in the service. The adults were appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service. This poses a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service.
The registered provider did not ensure that each employee and unpaid worker were deemed suitable and competent prior to the adults commencing in the service by not obtaining and validating the required references.

Not having all employees appropriately vetted may pose a risk to the safety and wellbeing of children attending the service. These on-compliances were found under Regulation 9 on last inspection 23 and 24 November 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a) (b)

Corrective Actions

1. A written and validated reference in respect of one adult is now available. A copy of the reference is now available and has been validated using the Telephone Reference Validation form.
2. Three past employer references in respect of two adults are now validated.
3. The two references obtained from a source other than a past employer have now been validated. Copies of the references are now available and have been validated using the telephone reference validation form.

(2)(d)

The available police vetting was translated by an independent certificated translator. A copy of the translated police vetting has been submitted to the inspector following the inspection.

(3)

Vetting and International vetting is available for all staff members and the manager. A copy of all vetting is available in the service.

Preventive Actions:

(2)(a)(b)

1. Going forward a written and validated reference will be available for all staff members and any person in the service. This will be reviewed by the manager before the person commences work in the service.
2. Going forward all past employer references will be validated. The references will be validated by the manager before the person commences in the service.
3. Going forward all references obtained from a source other than a past employer will be validated by the manager before the person commences work in the service.

(2) (d)

Going forward all police vetting required will be obtained prior to the staff commencing in the service. The recruitment policy is updated to include this practice.

(3)

Going forward, all vetting procedures will be completed before the person commences in the service. The process of vetting and updating each stall member prior to commencing in the service for new and existing staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b)

Copy of the required references and evidence of validations.

(2)(d)

Copy of the required certified police vetting clearance.

Summary Comment

Based on the corrective and preventive actions and supporting documentation provided by the registered provider following the inspection, the areas of non-compliance under Regulation 9 are resolved.

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 in attendance.

(2)

On the 26 November 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the service. Eleven adults worked directly with the forty-three children in attendance in the morning. Nine adults cared for twenty-three children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

On the 26 November 2025, more than two adults were available in the service 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children:

The inspector observed that the adults supported the children's learning, development and well-being. The adults interacted in a kind manner with the children, responded to their individual cues for assistance. 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. Speech and sound development were promoted by all the adults during discussions, songs and during story time. The children transitioned from open ended play, circle time discussions, songs and dance to mealtime, outdoor play, to open ended play-based activities. The adults and children sat together during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion.

Physical and Material Environment:

The three care rooms and the sensory room were in operation during the inspection. The indoor environments were bright, spacious and adequately resourced for the age range and developmental needs of the children in attendance. The care rooms offered a range of play-based activities and were laid out with low level shelving, tables and chairs that were accessible to the children. Area of interest included: reading/library areas, construction play areas, home corner, low level shelving with art materials, puzzles, manipulative play equipment, Montessori based wooden equipment and small world items. The walls in the playroom displayed visual learning aids for the children and their art activities.

A small, enclosed outdoor play area is located to rear of the Sunroom /room one is used on a rostered basis by the children. The play equipment is stored in a shed. During the inspection two of the three care rooms accessed the outdoor play area and engaged in chasing games, danced to music and used ride on toy vehicles.

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 entrance to the service was secured by a key coded, a high-level switch and bell operated system to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play area was secured with high level fencing, concrete walls and locked gates to protect the children within.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded in a record book, and the children were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals during the inspection.
- Perishable food items were stored in refrigerators in each care room.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered by the service during the inspection.
- Documentation was available in the event that medication was required.

Fire Safety:

- The adults held records of fire safety training.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completed monthly fire drills.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service and identifiable with signage.
- The adults readily identified the fire assembly point.

Outing:

- The registered provider stated that outings are not undertaken by 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)
Three adults working directly with the children held records of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
- (2)(a)
Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible and conspicuous positions in the care rooms and office/reception area.
- (b)
First aid boxes were available in the service for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

A record for completed monthly fire drills was available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 21 November 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 the September 2025 and October 2025.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed at the entry/exit points in the building.

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 sixty-six children attending the part-time service. The insurance policy is valid until 27 March 2026.