

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE103		
Name of Service:	Mountshannon Childcare Centre		
Address of Service:	Mountshannon, Mountshannon, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V94 YW95		
Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Cahill		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM 40
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy & J. Hayes		
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		

Description of service

Mountshannon Childcare Centre is a purpose-built community childcare service located in the village of Mountshannon, County Clare. The service operates Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:00 providing full day, part-time and sessional care. A school aged childcare service is provided each afternoon and during school holiday periods.

The single storey building comprises of five care rooms, a kitchen, sanitary facilities and an enclosed outdoor play area at the rear and both sides of the service. The five care rooms included: the Rainbow room and the Caterpillar room (age range: one to two years), the Bumble Bee room (age range: two to three years), the Butterfly room (age range: two to four years), and the Sweetpea room (age range: four to five years). School aged childcare is provided in the entrance lobby.

Staffing

Seventeen adults are currently employed by the service. On the 17 February 2026 the manager, the assistant manager and an auxiliary person who prepares, cooks and serves the food were present during the inspection. Nine adults worked directly with the pre-school children. The managers provided an administrative role and relief cover when required. The registered provider is part of the board of management and does not work in 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 and premises and facilities. The regulations inspected included:

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 22 – Food and drink

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

Regulation 29-Premises (b)(d)(e)

Regulation 30-Minimum space requirements (1)(2).

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 manager, the assistant manager, the staff and the 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 manager was the person in charge, and the assistant manager was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and the assistant manager were available during the inspection.

(2)

Eighteen files were available in respect of the registered provider and the seventeen adults working in the service.

The findings included the following:

(a)

Twenty-eight written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Eight written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of adults working in the service

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eighteen adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes in relation to one adult as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of one adult working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from 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.

(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 17 February 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Ten adults cared for the forty-two children in attendance in the morning and eleven adults care for the forty children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
During the inspection 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)
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. Five care rooms were 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 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, to be held and to be hugged. A key person approach was adopted in each care room. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the children's individual preferences, personal interests and capabilities. The transitions in the changes of activities and environments in each room were facilitated with ease. The adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of activities.

The older children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their personal belongings, using the toilet, participation in tasks and tidy up time. The adults promoted the children to manage their own personal care and nasal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children's nappies were changed on an individual need's basis, and the adults carried out these procedures in a sensitive manner. The children's cues for sleep were responded to in a prompt and calm manner during the designated sleep period. Individually designed areas for the children to rest and relax were provided for the children in the indoor area with soft furnishings and reading materials and used by the children periodically. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable period. The younger children were encouraged to feed themselves and were promoted to be independent. Suitable age-appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided during mealtime.

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 service ensured that a nutritious variety of food was offered to the children in attendance. A healthy eating policy and a fortnightly menu plan was available to inform the adults working in the service and shared with parents/guardians. Children were offered breakfast on arrival to the service. The service provided a mid-morning snack of pancakes, yoghurt and various fruit. The service provided a hot meal of shepherd's pie. A snack of brown bread and fruit was offered in each room in the afternoon. Water was available during mealtime and accessible to the children in each care room throughout the day.

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:

1. Garda vetting was available for eighteen adults employed by the service. However, one of the eighteen vetting disclosures was 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:

1. Garda Vetting has now been obtained in respect of the adult. Going forward, the service will follow the recruitment policy and ensure Garda vetting applications are completed every three years.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the required Garda vetting disclosure.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered providers corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence the non-compliance under Regulation 23 General Safety is addressed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (b)
- The service was maintained in a safe and secure manner as follows:
- A key coded, bell operated system, camera surveillance and a high-level switch were in place to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- A record of attendance was available and completed by visitors to the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall and fencing 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.
- A risk assessment was available demonstrating the measures taken by the service to mitigate risk.
- (d)
- The service was maintained in a clean condition and in an adequate state of repair. Cleaning schedules were available demonstrating measures taken to clean service.
- (e)
- The children had access to sanitary facilities adjacent to the care rooms. The two children's sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with child sized toilets and wash hand basins. Two nappy changing facilities were available and appropriately equipped with changing mats. Two adult sanitary facilities were also available.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)
Adequate clear floor space was provided for the children attending the service on 17 February 2026. The service provided a space for the children to freely move and engage in play-based and educational activities across the five pre-school rooms.

(2)
On the 17 February 2026 adequate space was provided for the children attending the service. The care room measurements are detailed in the table below:

Care Room Names:	Total Space Measurement per Care Room:
Rainbow Room	20.12 m ²
Bumblebee Room	40.34 m ²
Caterpillar Room	17.94 m ²
Butterfly Room	57 m ²
Sweetpea Room	48.59 m ²