

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE119
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Name of Service:	Ruan Community Childcare Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Ruan National School, Ruan, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 R206
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gai Hardy
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	28/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
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
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Description of service

Ruan Community Childcare Limited was established in 1996, as a community service, on the grounds of Ruan National School. The service facilitates a play-based programme of care and education for children ranging in age from two to six years on a sessional and part-time basis, Monday to Friday from 09:30 to 14:00. A school aged childcare service is facilitated after the part time service concludes.

The purpose-built service is located in a detached single storey building. The programme of care and education is provided in three interlinked open plan rooms called the blue, the red and the green rooms. A large enclosed outdoor play area is available to the rear and side of the building. Part of this area is covered with a canopy which facilitates outdoor sensory play in all weather conditions.

Staffing

On the 28 January 2026 the registered provider alongside three adults worked directly with the pre-school children and an administrative person was present on a voluntary basis. An adult works each afternoon with the school aged children. The service is a community-based service managed by a local voluntary board of management.

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

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

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 29 –Premises (c)

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

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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. 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, 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)

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

(b)

The registered provider was available during the inspection.

(2)

Six files were available in respect of the registered provider and the five adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

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

(b)

Five 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 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 available in respect of four adults 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

International police vetting was not available in respect of one adult working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider provided the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d)

The adult applied for the police clearance on the 28 January 2026. The police clearance certificate has now been obtained, the service has a certified translated copy and a copy was submitted to the Inspectorate. This copy has also been placed on file in the service.

Going forward at interview stage the service will ensure there is Police Clearance for any new employees who have lived outside of Ireland for more than six months.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d)

A copy of the Police Clearance certificate.

Summary Comment

Based on the registered provider's corrective and preventive actions and supporting evidence, the area of non-compliance under Regulation 9(2)(d) is addressed.

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 28 January 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Four adults cared for the fifteen children in attendance in the morning and the seven 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, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children. Three rooms were in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a caring manner. 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 while the children used the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care and prompted to wipe their noses at appropriate intervals.

Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion. Parents provided healthy and nutritious food for the children. Water was freely available in containers accessible to the children throughout the day. Appropriate crockery and feeding utensils were provided. The adults supported the children's choice of individual and group engagement in a range of enriching experiences. The children were offered a range of opportunities to engage in constructive, sensory, manipulative, creative and pretend play and learning. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area for play based activities under supervision. Children's care and daily learnings were communicated with the parents/guardians in a positive manner as they collected their children from the care rooms.

Physical and Material Environment:

The care rooms were bright, spacious and well-resourced and were laid out to enable the children to freely access the equipment and materials. The physical layout in the three rooms was designed to be stimulating, challenging and interesting for children. Throughout the day, the children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities and observed to be fully engaged as they transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environments. Learning aids and the children's individual artwork were displayed. A variety of defined areas of interest were available. The care rooms were appropriately resourced with a shop and home corner, art stations, sensory areas, pretend play wooden houses, constructive play areas, wooden activity units, and balance blocks. Seating with soft furnishings and mats with adjacent reading materials were used by the children to rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, sensory, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children.

The outdoor play area located to the side and rear of the service was accessible the green room. The play area was enclosed and had an all-weather synthetic material surface. A covered section was available with opportunities to engage in sand and constructive play in all weather conditions. The children had access to an activity unit, a pretend playhouse, wall mounted games, water play stations, sensory play tables, an activity unit with slides and a climbing frame, and a range of rocking toys, ride on vehicles and bicycles were available. The children were observed to thoroughly enjoy their time in the indoor and outdoor environments.

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 to and from the childcare facility. Unauthorised persons are recorded in the visitors' book.
- 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.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. The registered provider stated that the children currently do not require medication to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

- Rest facilities were available and accessed by the children during the inspection. This area comprised of a couch and soft furnishings and a shelving unit with a large range of reading materials.

Fire Safety:

- Records of completed monthly fire drills are available in the service.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- The fire assembly point and the fire exit route signage were readily identifiable.

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)

Two adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box were stored in the care room. The adults working in the service were familiar with the location of the first aid box.

(b)

The first aid box was available 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)

Records of completed monthly fire drills were available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 15 January 2026.

(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 maintenance service took place respectively on the 01 and 03 October 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the service.

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 thirty-five children attending on a part-time basis. The policy is valid until 27 November 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

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

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(d)

The service was maintained in a clean condition and in adequate state of repair.

(e)

The children had access to sanitary facilities adjacent to the care rooms and wash hand basins in the care rooms. The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with two child sized toilets and two wash hand basins. An adult sanitary facility was 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 28 January 2026. The service provided a space for the children to freely move and engage in play-based and educational activities across three interlinked rooms.

(2)

On the 28 January 2026 adequate space was provided for the children attending the service. The care rooms measurements are detailed in the table below:

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Room Names:	Total Space Measurement:
Blue Room	39.7 m ²
Red Room	28.2 m ²
Green Room	48.6 m ²