

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW033
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Name of Service:	Pied Piper
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Address of Service:	Woodgrove Community Centre, Woodgrove, Rathvilly, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 K061
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Name of Registered Provider:	Anna Deering
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 AE10
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Inspection undertaken by:	Lorraine O' Connor
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Pied Piper is located in Rathvilly, in Co. Carlow. The service operates from a purpose build premises which is located within a residential area. It is open from 9.30am until 1pm daily. It caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. The service provides the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

There is one care room within the building with an adjoining outdoor area. The sanitary facilities for the children are adjoining the care room.

Staffing

The service employs five staff members, including the registered provider. The registered provider does not work within the service with the children. The staff members working directly with the children had at a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or higher.

On the day of inspection, there were three adults working with the children and an additional adult arrived in the service at 12pm.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations Regulation 9 Management and recruitment. Regulation 11 -Staffing, Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service, Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child and Regulation 25 - First Aid. However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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.

(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 designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member appointed to deputise when required were present in the service.
- (b) The designated person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) A total of five files were reviewed and the following was noted:

- (a)(b) Written validated references were available for the five adults from a previous employer and/or a source other than a previous employer.

(c) The required Garda Vetting disclosures were in place for the five adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. 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. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child of this report.

(d) Through a review of documentation, it was determined that police vetting was not required.

(3) Recruitment and vetting procedures were carried out in advance of appointment for all staff.

(4) The adults working directly with the children held 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.

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)(3)

There was an adequate number of adults working with the children for the duration of the inspection and the required adult to child ratio was in place for the duration of the inspection. At 10am, there were 3 adults working with 17 pre-school children aged 2- 5 years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The children’s attendance was reflective of the children present and maintained throughout the inspection when children arrived and when children were collected from the service.
 - (i) A staff roster was available for review, and it was reflective of the staff members present on the day of inspection.
 - (j) Administration of medication records were not available for review. The named person in charge explained that the service does not routinely administer medication to children attending the service. The service’s policy was reflective of the practices discussed. In the case where medication was required to be administered, the service had a method to record it.
 - (k) A sample of the accident and incident records were reviewed. The records included details of the accident and/or incident, evidence of communication with the parent and/or guardian and measures taken by the staff members. This was reflective of the service’s accident and incident policy.

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

The children engaged in play in the outdoor environment throughout the inspection. On arrival to the service, the children were immersed in their play. The staff members outlined that the service operate an open-door approach to the outdoor environment whereby the children could choose to be indoors or outdoors. This practice was reflective of the service's policy which outlined that the service operated a seamless provision of indoors and outdoors for the children. The children were observed to be afforded with this choice throughout the inspection. For example;

- At 10.30am, one child was observed to walk indoors and asked the staff member who was inside if they could do a glueing activity. The staff member warmly responded to the child and provided them with the relevant materials. The child and staff member sat at the table for a short time engaged with the arts and crafts activity. The remaining sixteen children remained engaged in their play outdoors with two adults.
- At 11.30am, three children removed their welly boots at the door and put their shoes on. One staff member asked the children what they were planning to do indoors, one child excitedly responded with 'I am going to make a picture'. There were thirteen children indoors while three children remained in the outdoor area. The children were engaged with arts and crafts and jigsaws.

Staff members outlined that the children were provided with a snack table in the outdoor area and that the children could decide if they would like to eat something at this time. At 10.30am, the children were provided with crackers and slices of apples. The children brought their own food for lunch time and ate this at 12pm. They enjoyed sandwiches, crackers, fruit and yogurts. The staff members ate with the children and discussed what the children would like to do the following day during.

While in the outdoor environment, the children were provided with a space which supported their play ideas, choice and varying types of play. In discussion with staff members, it was outlined that the curriculum and

routine of the service was led by the children and their interests. This was reflective of the service’s outdoor play policy which stated that the children are provided with active learning experiences to practice developing their skills and enriching their understanding of the world around them. The staff members were observed to playfully support the children’s play ideas throughout the inspection. For example;

- One child who was playing with their doll approached a staff member and explained that their doll had a fever. The staff member responded asking how long the doll was unwell. The child explained the doll had woken with a fever and the staff member smiled at the child and said, ‘we need to get their temperature down, and I know how’. The staff member handed the child a wet cloth and explained to place it on the dolls head for 10 minutes. The child, smiling at the staff member, walked away with the cloth placed on the dolls head and returned moment later explaining that the doll still had a temperature. The staff member playfully asked the child ‘what will we do now?’. The child responded they were going to give the doll medicine. The staff member asked if the doll had eaten anything yet, as this would also make them feel better. The child excitedly ran to the table and placed the doll onto a chair. The child proceeded to cook a barbeque to make the doll food.

The layout of indoor and outdoor environments supported the children’s independence and it had varying areas of interest with supporting materials. This was reflective of the service’s outdoor play policy which outlined that the outdoor area provided children with diverse, creative and enriching experiences. The following was available for the children within both the indoor and outdoor environments;

- A home-corner which consisted of a kitchen, tables, chairs and pretend food items. Real life items including a microwave, pots, pans, baking books and a BBQ.
- A construction area which provided the children with cars and trucks of varying sizes. Indoors the children had access to a car mat and outdoors the children were observed playing with the trucks in the sandpit. There was also varying sizes of blocks available for the children.
- Opportunities for role play through dress up clothes, handbags, dolls, buggies and doctors play equipment.

The service’s policy on managing behaviour outlined that children are recognised as unique with individual abilities and preferences. The practices observed during the inspection were reflective of the service’s policy. The staff members recognised the children’s interests, preferences and achievements. In discussion, the staff members provided an insight to what materials and what areas individual, or groups of children enjoyed playing

in. They were familiar with children’s interests and abilities and used varying strategies in recognising this. For example;

- In the outdoor area, a child was playing on a scooter and then proceeded to use a balance bike. The staff member described to the inspector the child’s enjoyment of the bikes/ trikes each day when they were outdoors. A short while later, this child went indoors to make a jigsaw. A different staff member who was indoors explained the child’s interest in making jigsaws each day. This staff member sat with the child asking which jigsaw they had chosen today and spoke about the farmer which was in the picture of the jigsaw. When the child finished the jigsaw, they quietly tapped the pieces together and looked towards the staff member. The staff member smiled at the child and positively responded to the child’s accomplishment by sitting with the child and recognised their achievement.

The staff members respectfully supported the children in their decision making and problem-solving skills through varying strategies. This included posing open ended questions and remaining within a close distance to provide support. For example;

- The staff member said to a child who was trying to put a sock onto the dolls foot ‘would you like some help or would you like to keep trying’. The child responded with ‘I can do it!’.
- There were two large tyres in the outdoor area. The children were observed to climb the tyres while the staff members supervised from a close distance. A staff member was overheard to say to one child who was standing at the top of the tyre ‘look before you jump and don’t forget to get your balance’.

This practice was supported through the service’s outdoor play policy which outlined that children are provided with an environment to investigate, explore and problem solve. These practices develop children’s skills while providing children with an assurance that support is available if they need it.

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 the five adults; however, one vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider responded through the CAPA process and outlined that renewed Garda Vetting was been completed for staff member. The service will have a list of dates of certificate and Garda vetting renewals at front of the folder to prevent missing the deadline again.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

The updated Garda Vetting disclosure and a completed template with the staff names and date for renewal of Garda Vetting disclosures was submitted.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced through discussion with the staff and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises and were out of the reach of the children.