

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW035
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Name of Service:	Rathoe Community HUB
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Address of Service:	Rathoe, Rathoe, Co. Carlow
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Eircode:	R93 DW90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elizabeth Flynn
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Athy Rd, Carlow.
Inspection undertaken by:	E Cullen
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).

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Description of service

Rathoe Community Hub is a non-profit years service, located in the village of Rathoe in north county Carlow. The service provides full day care, part-time, and sessional services to children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from a purpose-built premises. The service consists of two early years rooms, toilets and two large outdoor play areas for the exclusive use of the children attending the service. A school aged service is also provided for the local primary school which is situated directly across the road.

Staffing

The service currently employs eight staff members including staff on community employment schemes who work directly with children. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Students participating in work experience programmes were also present on the day of inspection. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5 and 8 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of a preschool child and 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the rainbow and butterfly rooms.

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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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)(b)(c) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person was available to deputise as required. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service. Information was available detailing the role of each staff member and specific responsibilities such as fire officer and designated liaison person for example.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the nine adults employed or on work experience placement in the service.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each from either a past employer, or from a source other than a past employer.

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(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff were working directly with the children at all times. There were 30 children with 4 staff members directly supervising them during the morning of the inspection and 11 children with 2 staff members during the afternoon.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

- The butterfly room, there were 14 children aged 2 years 10 months to 4 years old being cared for by 2 staff.
- The rainbow room, there were 16 children aged 4 to 5 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

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Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) – (i) Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form was developed by the service and contained all of the required information for parents and guardians to complete. A sample of ten child registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection, and all were completed in full with appropriate declarations signed by parents and guardians.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*

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- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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)(a) – (k)

The registered provider ensured that all relevant information was accessible and available for inspection by authorised persons. Information notice boards in the lobby displayed relevant staff information, the Tusla registration certificate was on display providing confirmation of the class of service registered. Staff rosters were available on a staff notice board.

Each early years room was responsible for maintaining records of attendance, administration of medication and any accident or incident records. Policies and procedures were available for staff in the office and a parent's handbook was also available.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

Both early years rooms were bright, warm, and homely, this was achieved using natural materials and neutral colours. Rooms were personalised to each group with through the display of works of art and their recent learning. Well laid out library areas included books, dress up materials and puppets were available for use by the children.

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Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest in each room. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves. A range of real life and play-based materials were offered in the home corners, small world play, sensory areas and construction areas.

Furniture in each room was chosen to meet the needs of children in each group, tables and chairs for example were at suitable heights for the age ranges of children. Couches were available for rest or play. Children could freely access arts and crafts resources in each room, with paints, brushes, glue, scissors and junk art materials available.

Outdoors, children had access to a range of wheeled ride on toys, mud kitchens, a large sand pit, fort, water, playhouses, slides, raised planting beds and picnic benches. The outdoor cabin housed children's wet gear to support access to the outdoor play spaces in all weathers. Each classroom also had activity trays and natural sensory materials presented for children to engage with in a covered shelter linking to the outdoor area.

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 has an adequate healthy eating policy which is shared with parents and guardians. All food and drink was supplied by parents and guardians daily. There were refrigerators available on the premises for storage of perishable food items. Children attending on a part time and full day care basis were served a hot meal which reheated on the premises. Drinkable water was also available onsite, and children had free access to drinks throughout the day.

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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) There were two staff members trained in first aid response available to the children attending the early years service.
- (2)(a)(b) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions on the premises available for the use of the children attending the early years 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) There was a record of monthly fire drills which had taken place in the service. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 13 April 2026.
- (b) There was a record available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 12 September 2025 and the smoke alarm system was last serviced on 09 September 2025.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed beside each emergency exit door on the premises.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for full day care for 65 children at any one time. The insurance policy commenced 28 March 2026 and will expire 27 March 2027.