

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015DL117 |
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| Name of Service: | Ramelton Community Playgroup Ltd |
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| Address of Service: | Robertson School, Church Street, Ramelton, Co. Donegal |
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| Eircode: | F92 KT44 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Chanel Blaney |
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| Service type: | Sessional |
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| Date of Inspection: | 27/05/2025 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 17 | PM | 19 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | S Killeen |
| 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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| Conditions if applicable | Not Applicable |
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Description of service

Ramelton Community Playgroup is a community run pre-school. It offers morning and afternoon sessions service for pre-school children aged 2-6 years. The service operates from 8.45am-11.45am and 12.15pm-15.15pm daily. The service is based in the town of Ramelton. There is sanitary accommodation adjacent to the playroom for staff and children. A storage room and a kitchen are also on the premises. Outdoor play facilities are provided to the rear of the building which is secured with a boundary fence and hedging.

Staffing

There are a total of four adults employed within the service, which includes the person in charge and one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model. There was one student present on the day of inspection.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,23,25,27 and 28. 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. 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)

There was a person in charge and a person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on site throughout the inspection.

(c) A clear governance structure was in place, with defined roles and responsibilities. This structure was well understood within the setting and was clearly communicated to the inspector during the visit.

(2) (a) (b)

The records of the four adults employed in the service and one student on placement was reviewed on the day of inspection.

seven written and verified past employer references and three references from another source in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of the four adults employed in the service and the student on placement.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff working directly with the children and one student. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years

(4) Four adults had attained major awards in Early childhood care and education at level 5 or above on the national framework of qualifications, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

2 (d) International police vetting for one staff member who had lived out of the country for six consecutive months had not been obtained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The register provider received US Police clearance. All future staff will be supported to apply for international police checks if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Up dated policy and Photographic evidence provided. Us Clearence

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 9 (2) has been adequately 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.

(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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There were fore adults working directly with 17 children on the morning session of the unannounced inspection. In the afternoon session there were fore adult working directly with 19 children.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

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

19 (a)

- The indoor environment was carefully designed to be comfortable, inviting, and well-organized, catering to the needs of the children attending the service. It included clearly defined interest areas; each equipped with a diverse range of play materials and equipment to support and stimulate various aspects of children's development.
- Open shelving stocked with a variety of inviting toys provided children with easy access to engaging materials, encouraging exploration and independent play.
- Children had access to a wide range of equipment, including threading activities, pegging and sorting tasks, small cars, and construction blocks—all supporting cognitive and fine motor development. Additionally, a dedicated reading/rest area offered a variety of books, and a dress-up corner encouraged imaginative play.
- The environment included a home corner with child-sized furniture, dolls and accessories, play food, and kitchen tools. It also featured a construction area with assorted building blocks, a small world play section, and a farm set with a variety of toy farm animals.
- Children were observed engaging in cooperative play with blocks and cars, as well as participating in more focused activities such as painting. Staff members were seated alongside the children, offering support and guidance when needed.
- The outdoor environment, located at the rear of the premises, featured a tarmac surface and a spacious grassed area with a large treehouse, offering children a variety of opportunities for active and creative exploration. The area was thoughtfully developed with wall-mounted activities, gardening stations, and playhouses.
- On the day of inspection, the outdoor space was actively used. Staff informed the inspector that outdoor play is an integral part of the children's daily routine, ensuring that the children get outside each day.
- A large shed was also available for play during inclement weather. Additional features included a sand tray for sensory play, a mud kitchen, ride-on bikes, basketball hoops, and balls, supporting both physical activity and imaginative engagement.

- The service promoted healthy eating, with children sharing their snacks in small groups. Each group was supported by an adult who sat with them during the meal, fostering a calm and social mealtime environment. Snack time was not rushed, and each child was given the time they needed to finish their snack.
- A drink station was available throughout the session, where all children's water bottles were easily accessible to encourage regular hydration.
- Aprons were available to the children for messy play activities. Spare clothes were available if the children required a change of clothing during the session.
- Children were observed using the toilet independently with both adults in the room available to support if required. Appropriate hand washing practices were encouraged throughout the session before snack and after messy play.
- Staff were observed on the day of inspection responding to the children's needs appropriately by getting down to their level using soft tones and making eye contact with them when they were speaking.
- Staff were observed to be responsive to the interactions of the children during play, helping one child who had become upset as they were not able to whistle while supporting children outside who were having a disagreement over a toy. Staff listened to each child and spoke about the importance of taking turns and sharing resources.
- The children's mobility was not hindered at any time and the children could move about freely.
- children who required assistance with integration into the group and additional assistance was provided with this support as needed.
- The same adults worked in the service daily and the children were observed to be comfortable with them and sought out their assistance as required.
- On the day of the inspection, the children were rehearsing a play that they would be performing at their graduation ceremony for parents. All the children were dressed as planets and had created the props themselves with the assistance of their teachers.
- The staff team appeared to work well together, completing a hand-over when the morning session was over and before the afternoon session began.
- Staff operated in partnership with parents as demonstrated by interaction at drop off and collection. Settling in and transitions were made as smooth as possible with.
- Staff were observed giving children a five-minute reminder when one activity was about to end. Children were observed self-directing their own play. They were given the opportunity to choose activities daily, follow through on their choices, and change activities if they wished.

- Ongoing observations and assessments were documented, helping to create a well-rounded picture of each child. These observations informed curriculum planning. The curriculum was observed to be flexible, adapting to the emerging interests, needs, and preferences of the children.
- The programme of activities and learning completed in the main preschool room was displayed at the entrance to the service in a scrapbook format, accessible to parents during drop-off and collection.
- Evidence of goal-planning themes was available. Some of the learning goals included, World Book Day, St Patrick's day, early writing skills, children's voice and Pyjama Day in school. These topics supported children's learning through fun, hands-on activities.

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 main entrance into the service was found to be secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- The hot water provided at the children's wash hand basins was controlled to a safe temperature below 43°C for hand washing.
- Materials and resources both indoor and outdoor were maintained in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen area was securely restricted and not accessible to the children.
- All electrical leads and flexes were safely positioned out of reach.
- Waste materials were properly stored to prevent child access
- Headcounts were completed when transitioning from one area to another to ensure all children were present.
- All perishable items were stored in the fridge.

Infection Control:

- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to and after snack time.
- Foot operated pedal bins were observed throughout the premises.

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available for safe hand hygiene practises. Child friendly hand wash posters with picture instructions were placed above the wash basins.
- The materials and resources throughout the service were visually clean, with cleaning schedules in place and up to date in each care room.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had a medication administration policy in place and on discussion with staff they were knowledgeable of their responsibilities for the safe administration of medication.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed on the day of inspection to ensure safe evacuation in the event of a fire or other emergency.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) First aid boxes were available and safely stored in the premises

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the inspection, the required ratio of qualified adults to children was maintained, ensuring that every child was under the supervision of a qualified staff member. The staff were observed positioning themselves within the room to allow them to engage effectively with the children, offering supportive and attentive supervision. During mealtimes staff sat closely with the children at the table's, ensuring help was given when required. The outdoor area was designed to ensure that the children can be kept within sight and sound of the staff.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children in attendance. The insurance certificate was observed to be valid until 27 March 2026.