

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL133
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Name of Service:	St. Oran's Community Pre-school
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Address of Service:	St. Oran's N.S., Cockhill, Bunrana, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F93 YD52
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Name of Registered Provider:	Leah Cheesman
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna
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

St. Orans community preschool is a not-for-profit early years' service operating from the grounds of the local primary school in the townland of Cockhill outside Buncrana, Co. Donegal. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years and operates on a part time basis from 9.30am to 2.30pm with a sessional service operating from 9.30am-12.30pm each weekday. The premises consists of two interconnecting rooms on the first floor of a building to the rear of the school with access either from the outdoor play area or from the main entrance of the school. The two playrooms consist of one large room with adjacent sanitary facilities and a smaller room with sanitary facilities that was also used as an office space on the day of inspection. Children have access to an expansive outdoor play area that has been subdivided to provide different play opportunities.

Staffing

There are six staff employed by the service to work directly with children.

One additional adult in a contractor capacity attends the service weekly to facilitate a speech and language programme, and a student on work placement from a local secondary school also attends the service.

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation and 26 Fire Safety Measures.

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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge, who is the service manager, and a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the person in charge, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(2) The files for 6 staff, 1 student and 1 contractor were reviewed.

(a) (b) A total of 15 references was available of which 11 were validated.

Of the references that were available 5 were from a previous employer and 6 were from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 6 staff and 1 contractor. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for 6 employed staff. The registered provider did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early

Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice for the contractor, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

Garda vetting is not required for the transition year student.

(d) A review of the 7 available employment records demonstrated that 1 adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 months as an adult. The required police vetting was available.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the 6 staff employed to work directly with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for the contractor and student was not required.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) (b)

The registered provider did not ensure that all vetting procedures had been carried out to ensure that all adults working in the service are suitable;

- The validation process had not been carried out on a total of 4 written references available on file.
- There was no second reference available on file for one student.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two validated references submitted.

Reference for the student submitted.

All staff files will be updated annually to ensure correct information is provided.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of validated references.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 9 (2) (a) (b).

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance;

Four adults cared for 16 children aged 3 years 8 months to 4 years 9 months, of whom 15 attended on a part time basis.

(8) A review of the staff attendance records and through discussion with the person in charge it was determined that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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;

(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;

Compliance Information

(1) A record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) Details of attendance of each individual pre-school child who attends the service.

(i) A record which detailed staff hours on a daily and weekly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Employment records for one student were not available on file; therefore, it could not be determined if police vetting was required.
- (j) The person in charge and staff confirmed that there were no records of any medication administered to a child while attending the service, as they do not administer medication to children. This is contrary to the services policy on the administration of medication, which details the requirement for parental consent to administer prescription and anti-febrile medication and the procedure to follow in both instances, including the records required, storage and disposal of such medication. This is a recurring non-compliance which remained outstanding from the service's most recent inspection on 08 November 2022. The corrective and preventive response by the registered provider outlined "The service is waiting on a new policy to be drafted". This non-compliance remained outstanding following the corrective and preventive submission and was subject to review on the next inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a) Employment record on file. Files will be updated annually to ensure correct information is provided.

(j) Medication policy is now updated and emailed. It is updated on file for parents also. Will keep up to date with policy changes and amend.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of student employment record.

Copy of medication policy and antifebrile medication in place.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 16 (a) and (j).

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs

Snack time was observed to be relaxed and unrushed. The staff were observed to sit with the children and provide supports where needed. The children were encouraged to use the toilet independently, and children who required assistance who were recently toilet trained were provided with supports from staff during these times. Children appearances were cared for by staff encouraging children to practise self-care such as cleaning their own noses, and the children were dressed in waterproof clothing and welly boots, appropriate to the weather when going outside on the day of inspection. Cosy rest areas were provided in the smaller preschool room and sleep mats are available should a child require a sleep during their time in the service. A change of environment to an outdoor play area was facilitated for the children after morning snack time.

Supporting Relationships

The atmosphere upon the inspectors arrival was warm and welcoming, the children and staff were engaged in activities such as jigsaw play, a battery-operated animal and track game, colouring activities and sand play. The children displayed familiarity with the staff who cared for them and actively called out for staff when they required supports such as help with putting on dress up clothing or to work at an activity table. The staff were observed to promote positive behaviour, and praise was given for positive interactions. The staff were observed

to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and were observed to speak using soft gentle tones in their interactions with the children. Communication with parents is in person at arrival and collection times. In addition, the service has just began using a digital application to share photos of children during their day in the preschool service.

Physical And Material Environment

The preschool room was comfortable, pleasant and laid out to suit the needs of the children in attendance. The indoor environment provided a range of enriching experiences for children, through provision of designated interest areas to include; construction, home corner, dolls and equipment, dress up, sensory play, jigsaw, tabletop toys, creative area, floor play toys and small world play equipment. Materials were freely available and accessible to children on low level shelves and boxes at children's level, nurturing independence to retrieve and self-care to return. There were creative art pieces on display on the walls along with children's family photos, a birthday chart and a curriculum planning area. There are two outdoor areas designated on the school grounds for the use of the preschool service. One area is a large tarmac surface, surrounded by high level fencing and ride on trucks/trikes are used in this area. The second area has a ground surface of tarmac and soft fall surfacing and is surround by fencing and gates. Swings and slides, a mud kitchen, music wall, sand tray and a child's bench are available for use in this area. Part of this area is covered allowing for use during inclement weather conditions.

Programme of Activities

Observations and photographs were recorded in the new digital application and a learning journal with creative work was also available for each child. The service engaged in supports from a quality development service following the most recent inspection and praised the learning from this engagement as beneficial to their everyday work and in providing a voice for children in their curriculum planning. The curriculum planning is documented on an ongoing basis taking into consideration the children's emerging interests, for example records demonstrated included interest about planes and batman. The staff then outline how they would incorporate it into planning such as setting up an airport and celebrating a super hero week.

Children are facilitated to make their own choices during their play, which was observed on the day of inspection such as when a child wanted help to set up the computer in an office play area, and to play with the new battery-operated animal track.

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 premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- There were no hazards identified in the outdoor area used by the children on the day of the inspection.
- Toys and play equipment observed in use were in good condition.
- Risk assessments were completed daily, and records were available for review.
- Storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Blind cords were secured.
- Handrails on stairways were suitable for children use.
- Floor coverings throughout the preschool were maintained in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- Fire exits remained clear from obstruction during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm running water, liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins were provided in the sanitary areas. The children washed their hands prior to snack time and were observed to wash their hands following use of the sanitary areas.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of openable windows.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before snack time.
- Children's food items taken in from home for snack times were stored in the fridge.
- Cleaning schedules were available and completed up to date.
- The preschool service was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner throughout.
- External waste bins were stored securely and were inaccessible to children.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

In respect of the contractor, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, as a period in excess of 3 years had lapsed since their Garda vetting disclosure was issued.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Contractor vetting applied for. Waiting for return. Files will be updated at the beginning of each school year

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence of the Garda vetting application was submitted.

Summary Comment

At publication, the final Garda vetting certificate has not been received to date; therefore, Regulation 23 remains outstanding. When the Garda vetting certificate has been received, the registered provider must submit evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate.

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 registered provider ensured that a person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two staff members held in-date FAR training certificates.

(2) (a) & (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on the premises and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations out of the reach of children.

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) A record of the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded in September 2025
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated June 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls in the preschool, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) (b)
- There was no record available on file for the installation and maintenance of the newly upgraded smoke alarm system.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Smoke alarm cert received from primary school. We will remain in contact with the school in regard to all fire safety measures.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the fire detection and alarm system certificate.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider and supporting documentation submitted has adequately addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 26 (1) (b).