

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY070
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Name of Service:	Clifden Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Boys Old School, Low Road, Clifden, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H71 TW53
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Name of Registered Provider:	Thérèse Boulger
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	15/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F Kelly
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

This community sessional service is in the old Boys School in the town of town of Clifden, Co Galway. It operates two sessions daily- a morning session from 09:00 to 12:00 and an afternoon session from 12:30 to 15:30. The service also has an outdoor play area at the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were four adults present on the day of inspection which included the registered provider

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.

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.

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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.*

(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.

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Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was one named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was on the premises.
- Following a review of the service files and discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that there was six members of staff employed in the service. These staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.
- (2)(a) Of the required 12 written and appropriately validated references, 11 of these were from a previous employer.
- (b) Of the required 12 written and appropriately validated references, 1 of these references available was from a reputable source other than a previous employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the staff working in the service.
- (d) A police vetting disclosure was available for one adult working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All the adults working directly with children had obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from level 5 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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) During the period of inspection there were adequate numbers of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.
- (3) The following care room was in operation.
- The morning session at 10:00, there were 4 adults caring for 14 pre-school children

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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

When the inspector arrived at the service the children were observed engaging in different play activities around the service, both in the indoor play area and in the outdoor area, which included the following:

- Sensory play which included play dough and play in the outdoor play area.
- Creative play which included the colouring table, where children were observed colouring in large shapes on a large sheet of paper that covered a low-level table. Children were also seen playing with animals and small world toys on a tuff table. Children used cereals and homemade play dough to make different shapes. Children listened to adults reading stories or looked at picture books in the quiet area.
- Imaginative play which included the home corner and the transport area. The children made a house using soft matting.
- Active play where the children used the outdoor play equipment, which included slides, ride on toys and climbing equipment.
- Constructive play using various sizes and types of building blocks.
- The play environment was organised so the children could move freely from one play activity to another. The staff facilitated the play rather than taking the lead role. The children could move freely from indoors to outdoors and with the four staff present, there were adequate staff to ensure that the areas were fully supervised at all times.
- When it was time to tidy up and move to another activity, the staff introduced a sand timer to help the children transition to another task or activity. The children were observed happily singing and tidying up before they moved to another task.
- The staff were heard praising and encouraging the children throughout the sessions. The staff used phases such as "you are doing a super job" and "well done".
- The children played in the outdoor play areas for a long period of time throughout the session.

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- A table was set up in one section of the playroom. The table was cleaned and was laid with a tablecloth. The children could decide when they would sit to eat their lunch. Children washed their hands before they retrieved their lunch from the fridge. The children were given enough time to eat their lunch. When they were finished, they returned their lunch boxes to their bags. They were then free to continue with the next activity they decided to engage in. The staff members had a list of the children's names and they recorded when the children ate their lunch, so they could tell parents at the end of the session when each child had their lunch. The staff members were also observed sitting with the children while they had their lunch and were observed speaking to and engaging with the children.
- The snack was not for a specific timeframe; the children could decide when they wanted to eat. Children were observed eating their snack at various times throughout the session.

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 trained in first aid was immediately available to the preschool children attending the service. There were two adults trained in First Aid Responder available to the children.
- (2)(a) There were two suitably equipped first aid boxes available to the children, the contents were checked on a regular basis.
- (b) The first aid boxes were stored in the cupboard in the indoor playroom.