

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY094
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Name of Service:	Kelly Childcare Formative Years
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Address of Service:	Tí Chionn, Gleann na Rí, Murrough, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 YT1W
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Name of Registered Provider:	Paul Kelly
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Service type:	Full day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

The pre-school service is located on the east side of Galway city beside the Galway Irish Crystal shop. The service has its own enclosed play area with access to the local beach. The service has close links with the surrounding community. This preschool provides a sessional and ECCE programme of care from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year and operates a part-time service until 14.00hrs. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 years 8 months and 6 years of age. The preschool curriculum promotes child led learning based on the child's emerging interests. There is adequate space for drop off and collection. The premises consists of 2 playrooms Starfish room (room 1) and Dolphin room (room 2). The service has its own kitchen, storage room and sanitary facilities. There are eight stackable beds to provide opportunity for sleep provision for any child attending the part-time programme. Both playrooms provide child size soft seating and matting for children to rest, relax or opt out of an activity if they choose. The pre-school children have direct access to the outdoor play area from each of the two playrooms.

Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge. There is a deputy person in charge and four additional staff members who work and care directly for the children. Six adults employed to work with pre-school children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 6, 7 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, and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 Record of Pre School 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 registered provider, 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) The registered provider was the named designated person in charge in the service and there was a named person to deputise as required in his absence.
 - (b) The registered provider and a deputy person in charge were available on the premises throughout the period of the inspection.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service identifying the lines of authority and accountability. The staff demonstrated awareness of their specific roles and responsibilities during discussions with the inspector.
- (2)
- (a) The inspector was informed by the staff that that there were 6 staff in total working in the service at the time of the inspection.
 - (b) Ten of the 12 required written validated references were available on file from past employers for the 5 staff working in the service.
 - (c) Two of the 12 required written validated references were on file from a source other than a past employer for one staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Vetting documents showed that international police vetting was available for 2 of the 6 staff who lived and worked for longer than 6 months in a state outside of Ireland over the age of 18 years.

(4)
The 6 staff working directly with children attending the service hold at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 6 to Level 8 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working with the preschool children.

On the morning of the inspection there were 18 preschool children present.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained throughout the inspection.

There were 4 staff (including the registered provider) directly caring for these children.

8(a)

From review of the service roster it was evident that the preschool service ensures that 2 adults are on the premises at all times during operational hours.

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)
- Records were randomly selected and reviewed for 12 children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following particulars:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) The date on which each child first attended the service.
 - (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
 - (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
 - (e) Names and contact details of other adults who were authorised to collect children were available.
 - (f) The documentation available supported the recording of specific illnesses, allergies, disabilities and dietary preferences for children.
 - (g) The name, address and telephone number of each child's general practitioner (GP) was recorded.
 - (h) Parents had indicated which immunisations their children had received.

(i) There was written parental consent for medical treatment of children in the event of an emergency.

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

Basic Needs

(1)(a)

- The children were observed to have healthy snacks and lunch on the day of inspection provided by the parents and guardians. Crackers, sandwiches, cheese, ham, a variety of fruit and chopped vegetables, rolls and yogurts were observed.
- The staff sat with the children when they ate chatting to them whilst supervising them. Individual drink containers were available during the day to the children in case they were thirsty and wanted a drink during activities.
- The children were toilet trained and were supported and encouraged to use the toilet independently at any time with the staff within earshot if help was needed. The staff prompted the children to wash their hands at various intervals throughout the session.
- The staff arranged appropriate activities throughout the day to meet the children's needs. Most of the children's time was spent playing outdoors during the inspection in the well-developed outdoor area that had a diverse range of play equipment and an all-weather sheltered area included.
- Both playrooms had direct access to the outdoor play area. The children had free choice of play activities outdoors with numerous opportunities for messy play provided. Some of the children from Preschool 2 playroom made "potions" at the water basin while others played with blocks in the construction area and others played on the activity climbing frame and slide. Physical activity was supported for example with children and staff from both playrooms playing a game together throwing balls through hoops. Children were observed to play with the staff in a game of 'freeze dance' together.

Physical and Material environment

- The playrooms were well resourced and arranged in similar defined interest areas with home corners, construction areas, dress up/role play areas, creative areas with arts and crafts, musical instruments, small world area with figurines, animals, dinosaurs and small toys, an investigation area with nature table, puzzles and games, a transport area with cars, trucks, tracks and trains and a wide selection of toys and play materials.
- Toys and play equipment were suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children using them. The play equipment was stored and displayed at low levels to allow children to look at them and choose their preferred play activities and replace them after use depending on their developmental stage.
- The staff informed the inspector that play at the sensory tables was a favourite activity for some of the children.
- The playrooms were bright and colourful with plenty of natural light, with low level tables and chairs to suit the age and stage of development of the children attending the service.

Supporting Relationships

- The interactions between staff and children were observed to be warm and positive with the staff showing familiarity with the children they cared for. There was evidence of key worker systems in place and the staff advised the inspector that parents were aware of their child's keyworker.
- The staff promoted children to develop independence for example there was a sign-in system in each playroom with the children placing a photograph of themselves on a display board to show that they were in attendance in the playroom each day.
- Staff members were observed to speak with parents/guardians telling them about their child's day in the service at drop off and collection times at an entrance to the premises.
- The staff told the inspector that an electronic application was used to help communicate with parents including daily/weekly playroom activity updates with photographs sent out to update parents. Other communication methods included electronic systems to send private messages to parents if needed. Staff from the Starfish playroom showed the inspector an example of scrapbooks that had been made for each child of their special events, themed artwork and learning throughout the year. The parents are presented with these scrapbooks at graduation day.

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:

- There was a secure system to control admittance into the main entrance of the preschool.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised.
- The fire doors in the playrooms were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the pre-school on an electronic application.
- The temperatures in the playrooms were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition for the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined and pedal operated bins.
- Both the children and the adults washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, toileting and before mealtime and after messy play.
- Tissues were available for use by the children in each playroom and in the outdoor play area.
- Foot pedalled lidded bins were available throughout the service for the safe disposal of waste.

Safe Sleep:

- Cosy corners were available in each of the 2 playrooms with soft seating cushions and matting. Stackable beds are available for sleep provision for children attending on a part-time basis.
- The staff and children had a relaxation period after lunch where the children were provided with the time to unwind and rest in a quiet environment while a staff member read some story books.

Fire Safety:

- All fire door exits were free from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point was visible outside to the front of the premises.

Outing:

- The registered provider advised that the staff and children go on regular supervised walks to the seashore adjacent to the preschool service.

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 2 people trained in first aid responder FAR were available for the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a)

There was a first aid box safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position on the corridor.

(b)

The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last fire drill was dated 10/05/2025.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment with the last service dated 2/10/2024.
- A record was maintained of the smoke and fire detection system in the premises with the last annual service dated 20/06/2025.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance cover was available for 22 pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27/03/2026.