

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE095
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Name of Service:	Enquiring Minds
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Address of Service:	Yew Tree Square, Prosperous Road, Clane, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 KT73
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Name of Registered Provider:	Clare Venter
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	10/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	51	PM	48
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty and S Quigley
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Enquiring Minds is a privately owned childcare facility and one of three services operated by the registered provider. The service is registered to accommodate children aged 0 to 6 years. An option of sessional, part time and full day care is available. Sessions over a 38-week annual period, in conjunction with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service is open from 7.30am to 6.30pm.

The service is located in Clane, Co Kildare and operates from a purpose-built facility within an apartment complex. The service comprises of 5 care rooms, a designated sleep room and an outdoor area to the rear of the building. On the day of inspection four rooms were open to preschool children. Little Einsteins for children aged over 3 years, Little Professors for children aged over 3 years, Shooting Stars for children aged 2-3 years and Baby/Wobbler for children aged 0 – 2 years.

Staffing

The service employs a total of eighteen staff including a manager, deputy, twelve childcare staff, a cook and a cleaner. There were eighteen adults present on the day of inspection including the manager, deputy, twelve childcare staff, a cook, a cleaner and two maintenance people. The area manager and registered provider arrived subsequent to the inspector's arrival.

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, information and records, 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 the following regulations:

Regulation 9 -Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels,

Regulation 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service,

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child,

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,

Regulation 25 – First Aid.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 16 - Record in relation to pre-school service.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on the 10th July 2025 in respect of Regulation 23 – Safety. A response which addressed the risk was received from the service on the 10th July 2025.

Acknowledgments

The inspector(s) wish 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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

Following a discussion with the manager it was confirmed that twelve adults commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 15th March 2023. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(2)

(a)(b) Twenty four references were available from a past employer and three were available from a reputable source for the newly recruited adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed and available for all staff employed in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was required and available for four adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months.

(4) Records were available evidencing that eleven staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held evidence of the required qualification or a letter from the Minister deemed equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(3)

The registered provider did not take appropriate measures to ensure that all adults were suitable to work in an early years' service prior to their commencement as follows:

- There was no evidence available to demonstrate that seven references in respect of four adults had been validated by the registered provider before staff commenced working in the service.
- The registered provider could not demonstrate that Garda vetting in respect of one adult had been sought and reviewed prior to them commencing employment in the service.
- International Police vetting in respect of one adult had not been received or reviewed prior to the adult commencing work in the service.

(4)

There was no evidence available that one adult had the required minimum qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3)

This has now been corrected: all references back pages have been copied and are complete and clearly visible. Garda Vetting and international police vetting misplaced. We will continue to use our check sheets as all items are listed to ensure all references, vetting, and qualifications are received we will ensure that all pages are present for the TUSLA folder so that every document is immediately visible during inspection. A management cross-check is carried out on each staff file prior to commencement to confirm all required documentation is present and properly filed. Pre-inspection audits will be carried out to ensure that staff files are not only compliant but also inspection-ready, avoiding repetition of the filing issue noted.

(4)

A letter from the college was provided clarifying the qualification achieved.

We will continue to follow our checklist before staff commences work with us

Supporting documentation submitted

(3) Checklist and copies of references.

(4) Letter from the college re: qualification.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 9.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 51 children attending the service being supervised by 14 adults on the day of inspection.

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:*
- (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

- (h) Details of the attendance of each child in each room were electronically recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) A staff roster was in place which demonstrated the staff present on the day of inspection.
- (j) Of a sample size of fifteen medication administration records reviewed, all of the records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

(k) A sample of twelve accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) Six administration of medication forms were reviewed, of these three did not have signed parental pre-consent or confirmation that the information had been communicated regarding the medication to be administered.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

All parents complete a registration form, on the registration form there is a section where parents complete the medication administration including permission to administer medication, whether medication can be given in an emergency. Our procedure before a child is given medication, the parent is contacted and informed, the parent is asked if the child has had any other medication and if they consent to the child being given the medication. This is followed up on the APP and the administration of medication form is completed. Therefore, the parent is contacted in real time, and the information is then recorded and acknowledged by parents digitally and then with paperwork on collection. We feel that this method ensures that parents and all staff can see medication given and when, it is acknowledged and recorded both digitally and in paper format and ensures that it is available at all times to refer back to easily. Parents are contacted by the manager before medication is administered to ensure no other medication has been given and to ensure it is safe to do so.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of a blank registration form and a screenshot from the software application showing medication administered.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 16.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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

(1)(a)

The service promoted healthy eating and provided all meals and snacks to the children in the Baby/Wobbler, Shooting Stars and Little Professors rooms. The children in Little Einsteins brought in their snack from home. On the day of inspection fruit and crackers was served for a mid-morning snack and hot meal of ratatouille with pasta was served for lunch, scones were served for afternoon snack. Drinking water was available in all care rooms and milk was offered with the main meal.

There were rest areas available in each care room and appropriate sleep facilities were provided for children who required sleep throughout the day. Staff adhered to individual and needs led sleep requirements of children in the baby/wobbler room.

Children were observed to be encouraged to manage their own personal care throughout the inspection, appropriate to their age and stage of development. Examples included, independently accessing the sanitary facilities when necessary, wiping their faces following meals and self-feeding during mealtimes. Staff were available to support and guide children who required help.

Nappy changing was carried out at set times and as and when required. Staff were observed to engage with the children in a positive and sensitive manner during each change.

There was ample room for the children to move freely in both the indoor and outdoor areas. All children were observed to use the outdoor area on the day of inspection. The outdoor area was used as an extension of the indoor area with small key groups accessing the garden whilst others played inside.

All care rooms were set out in clearly defined areas with equipment and resources to provide opportunities to meet the learning needs of the children across all areas of development. These included a home corner with props, cosy area with books of varying interest to read and low-level shelving with puzzles and tabletop activities available to children to choose as they wished. Staff also had additional materials including art materials, sensory and play dough to encourage creative and imaginative play.

The outdoor area contained three separate areas for the children. There was artificial grass surfacing throughout, a large sandpit, seating for children, climbing frame and slide. A large, covered area was also available with large

construction toys. A smaller separate area was available for the baby/wobbler room with a small swing and push toys.

Staff supported children to resolve minor disagreements using positive language and offering alternative activities. Staff were observed to comfort children who were upset, and interactions were warm, engaging and sensitive to the children. Staff used soft tones and responded to children's cues. There was a keyworker system in place which helped further support staff and children to build positive relationships.

Staff communicated with parents using an online interactive software application which they updated in real time and at drop off and collection relaying information of the child's day to ensure continuity of care.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Hand sanitisers and cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children.
- The service was maintained in a clean condition and cleaning schedules were available.

Administration of Medication:

The service had an administration of medication policy in place. There were documented care plans available for children attending the service who required emergency medication.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep for example children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on sleep mats. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals throughout the service and written records of these checks were maintained.

Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction. Regular monthly fire drills took place with staff detailing the procedure to the inspectors.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A number of trailing cables were observed in reach of children and posed a risk of injury as follows:
 - In the Toddler sensory area, a large number of cables were in reach on children on the floor of the sensory room. Children were observed accessing this area unsupervised.
 - In the Little Professors room, a cable attached to a low-level socket was in reach of children in the room.
 - A trailing cable from a fan in the baby room was within reach of children.

Infection Control:

2. The nappy changing practices observed on the day of inspection posed a risk of transmission of infection as follows:
 - A staff member did not clean the bottom of a child who had wet their nappy, which was a variance with the service policy.
 - The staff member did not wash their hands prior to the nappy change.
 - The nappy changing policy required updating in line with best practice.
 - Children and staff in the Toddler room were observed to handle both bins in the sanitary area despite both pedals in working order. This poses a risk of cross contamination.
3. Children from the baby room were observed to be brought to the sleep room in their bare feet through the corridor where people walked and debris was observed. This poses a risk of cross contamination and injury.

4. The pedal bin in the Little Professors room was not working staff and children were handling the bin which was used for the disposal of both nappies and used tissues.

Administration of Medication:

5. It is acknowledged that a care plan was in place for a child who required emergency medication. When asked staff were not aware of where the medication was stored, management were also unsure when asked where the medication was stored. This could compromise timely medical intervention in the case of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Toddler rooms- sensory light, have been removed. Wobbler room- a risk assessment has been completed and noted that if a risk of heat overrides the use of a fan all measures will be taken. Moving plug socket will be looked at when room renovations are planned. Little Professors room – the cable has been removed, it is in a place that is high up that would require climbing on the furniture to pull on it. It will be reviewed on the weekly maintenance check sheet.

Infection Control:

2. Staff had received refresher training on the nappy changing policy. The policy we used was the policy provided by TUSLA directly. We have done a refresher with staff on nappy changing in the toddler room, to include the use of the pedals. We have done a refresher with staff on nappy changing in the toddler room, to include the use of the pedals.
3. No corrective or preventive action submitted.
4. The pedal bin was replaced. We will continue to complete weekly maintenance checklists to highlight broken items.

Administration of Medication:

5. The medication is checked weekly and recorded and included in the refresher training in the previous month. We revise and update the allergy and medication lists monthly, sooner if needed, this includes medication checks and training, we will continue to check the medication on a weekly basis as part of our room reports and safety check list as well as continue refresher training.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Risk assessment for fan submitted.

Infection Control:

2. Evidence of refresher training.
3. Risk assessment submitted.
4. No evidence submitted.

Administration of Medication:

5. Medicine storage check sheet submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box available to the adults caring for the children at all times. These were available in a conspicuous position in each care room in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

There was no evidence of an adult trained in First Aid Responder available to the children at all times as required.

It is acknowledged that a number of staff members had Paediatric First Aid training certification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) At present all staff are completing / completed the FAR or paediatric first aid, please see invoice from May when all training was booked in the hope it was to be completed within the month to ensure all training was in date. Reminders to be put in place three months and 6 months in advance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice for upcoming FAR and first aid training.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 25.

This will be reviewed on the next inspection.