

# TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

## Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances



Tusla I.D: TU2015KE144

Name of Service Auntie Anne's Country Crèche

Address of Service: Giltown, Kilcullen Co. Kildare, R56 TY27

Email Address: [auntieannescreche@gmail.com](mailto:auntieannescreche@gmail.com)

Name of Registered Provider: Regina Birchall  
Anne Birchall

Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time		Sessional	✓
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary	

Proposed change: It is proposed to increase the number of children attending from 70 to 90 and to change the hours of opening from 07:30am-18:30pm to 08:00am-17:30pm.

Proposed Number of Children: 90

Recommended Change Following Inspection: To change the opening hours from, 07:30am-18:30pm to 08:00am-17:30pm. Available floor space and the addition of supplementary sanitary facilities will accommodate a maximum number of **75** pre-school children attending on a full day care basis and **87** children on a sessional basis.

Registered change: Change in number of children from 70 to 87 (Max 75 full day care) children  
Change in hours of operation from 07:30 – 18:30 to 08:00 – 17:30

Date of Inspection:	2	3	0	6	2	0	2	5
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Inspection undertaken by: F. Maher, T. Duignan

Title: Early Years Inspectors

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<b>Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child and Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91X38W
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<b>Rationale for Inspection:</b>
Proposed Change of Circumstance

**Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office**

<b>Registration Status:</b>	Registered Full Day & Sessional Service for 87 (Max 75 Full Day Care) Children
<b>Date of Registration</b>	24 <sup>th</sup> November 2025

<b>Authority to Inspect</b>
The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

<b>Description of Service</b>	Auntie Anne’s Country Crèche is a private service providing full day care and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged 1-6 years. The pre-school currently opens from 7:30am – 6:00pm, Monday to Friday and is registered to accommodate 70 children. The service has proposed to increase the number of children attending to 90 and change the hours of opening to 8:00am-5:30pm.
<b>Premises</b>	Four pre-school rooms, a sensory room, sleep room and kitchen, are located across two single storey buildings, building ‘A’ and building ‘B’. Building ‘A’ contains two pre-school rooms, sanitary facilities and a sensory room and building ‘B’ contains two pre-school rooms, sanitary facilities, the sleep room and kitchen. There is a large, covered play space, the ‘Play Barn’ and a large well-resourced outdoor play area with various dedicated play facilities inclusive of covered play spaces which are located to the rear and sides of the premises. Parking is available to the front of the premises.
<b>Staffing</b>	There are 18 adults employed in the service including both registered providers, one cook and two administrators. The adults employed and working directly with the children, hold

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	qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or higher on the on the National Framework of Qualifications.
<b>Methodology</b>	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes: Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the inspection report and taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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.</p>
<b>Additional Information</b>	The service was found to be operating the change prior to approval from the Registration Office.
<b>Acknowledgements</b>	The Inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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.*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

The service has a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

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### 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.*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)

The registered providers have appointed a sufficient number of staff members to ensure the required adult: child ratios are maintained.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—*
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
  - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—*
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is partially met.

(1)(a)

There are suitable play materials and equipment for a maximum number of 87 and 75 children aged from 1-6 years to attend on a sessional and full-time basis respectively if additional sanitary accommodation is provided. The indoor environments are constructively planned with dedicated play areas and adequate play and learning equipment to promote numerary and literacy skills and prompt the children to explore and use their imagination. There are climbing cushions, push/pull equipment and sensory materials in the younger pre-school rooms to facilitate the children's gross motor development and expose them to sensorial experiences. There were plenty of art and craft materials, suitable props for the interest areas and materials and equipment for fine motor skill development in all rooms.

A sufficient and appropriate number of child-sized tables and chairs to cater for the proposed number of children as outlined above were available in all rooms. Low-level

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shelving units were in place displaying the materials and equipment ensuring ease of access for the children.

(b)

The rest areas consisted of sofas in the pre-school rooms in building 'A' and soft flooring, with the adjacent walls in these rest areas also covered with the same soft material, are available in the pre-school rooms catering for the younger children in building 'B'. These areas are comfortable for any child wishing to take a break from activities, rest or read.

Twenty-five low level beds are available for any child aged 2 years and above wishing to avail of a period of sleep when attending the full day care service. One cot room was equipped with fourteen standard cots to provide for the sleep needs of children less than 2 years old attending the service. Appropriate bed linen was in place for the cots and low-level beds.

(3)(a)

The outdoor area is safe and secure and surrounded by a boundary wall. Access to the premises, including the play area, which also has internal wooden gates with bolt locking mechanisms, is through the main gates which are electro-magnetically secure with key-pad access secure and are controlled by staff. The play area has various dedicated play spaces with plenty of sheltered areas and areas of natural foliage and planting. It is well-resourced and equipped with swing sets, rockers, climbing equipment, water and sand play and cycling/ride on equipment.

**Requirement not met:**

(1)(b)

A comfortable adult chair was not available in the Ash room to enable the staff sit comfortably with a child to rest and hold/comfort if required.

**Response from Provider:**

**29 August 2025**

No response received.

**10 November 2025**

Response received with supporting evidence, photograph x 1.

(1)(b)

A suitable seat has now been purchased.

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<b>Summary Comment:</b>	Following review of the submitted photographic evidence, the inspectorate is satisfied the requirement for Regulation 20 (1)(b) has been met.
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### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and Drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

<b>Requirement met:</b>	<p>The requirement is met.</p> <p>A cook is employed, and food is freshly prepared in the onsite kitchen daily. All meals and snacks are provided by the service.</p> <p>A three-week menu plan is available and demonstrates that varied nutritious food is provided. Drinking water is available in the service and is readily available for the children.</p> <p>The kitchen has been registered with the relevant authority, and the cook has food safety training.</p>
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### 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.*

<b>Requirement met:</b>	<p>The requirement is partially met.</p> <p>The main entrance gates to the pre-school are electro-magnetically secure with keypad mechanisms and are controlled by staff to prevent any pre-school child from exiting the service unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. The main entrance door to the service has a thumb-turning mechanism to secure from the inside.</p> <p>Storage is available for the safe storage of cleaning products and equipment.</p> <p>All fire exits were unobstructed and easily recognisable. The fire assembly point was displayed outdoors.</p>
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	<p>There is provision for the appropriate disposal of waste including the provision of foot pedal operated bins in the pre-school rooms and sanitary area and foot pedal sealed nappy bins for the hygienic disposal of soiled nappies.</p> <p>Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted dispensers are available for hygienic hand washing and drying in the sanitary areas in both 'A' and 'B' buildings.</p> <p>A pest control contract is in place for the premises and cleaning schedules are in place for the room environments.</p>
<p><b>Requirement not met:</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There was no hot water available at the three sinks in the proposed additional sanitary area in the Play Barn building for hygienic hand washing and infection control measures.</li> <li>2. The seat pad on the wooden upright chair in the Ash room was torn exposing the foam underneath; this could not be effectively cleaned for infection control purposes.</li> <li>3. The children's bags were stored on open shelves in the Sanitary area of building 'B'; this was not adequate for infection control purposes.</li> <li>4. There were no splash backs at any of the child sized sinks in the pre-school rooms or in the sanitary area of building 'B' to enable effective cleaning for infection control purposes.</li> <li>5. A previously wall mounted metal towel rail had not been completely removed and an end piece remained attached to the wall in the sanitary area of building 'B'. This was located above the children's wooden bench seating and was a potential risk to a child of banging their head when/if they stood up from sitting on the bench.</li> <li>6. The anchor device for the cord of one blind on the second window on the left-hand side in the Beech room was loose; this had the potential to detach from the wall and required securing.</li> <li>7. The following safety concerns were observed in the proposed additional sanitary area in the Play Barn building:</li> </ol>

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- Each toilet seat on each of the three toilets, were very loose and easily moved away from the toilet bowl surround; this had the potential for a child to fall off the toilet when sitting/using the toilet as the seats were unstable.
  - The bolt mechanisms on the inside of the cubicle doors were stiff and did not function easily, therefore, in the event a child managed to push the bolt into a closed position, they may not be able to readily release it; this was a risk for a child to become locked into the cubicle.
  - A piece of metal piping was protruding from the wall beneath the middle sink and was an injury risk to a child should they walk into it.
  - All of the pipework was exposed beneath the sinks and running up the wall and posed a risk of injury to a child from a scrape/entrapment injury.
  - Part of the flooring was observed to have lifted/detached from the linoleum and was a potential trip hazard.
8. The pipework beneath the sinks in the sanitary areas and pre-school rooms used by the children in buildings 'A' and 'B' were exposed and posed a risk of injury to a child from a hot pipe or scrape/entrapment injury.

### Response from Provider:

#### 29 August 2025

Response received with supporting evidence, photographs x 2, document x 1.

We have received our toilets, toilet seats and one large sink.

We have booked in a company to come next week to carry out a Core Hole for the bathrooms.

Two further sinks have been purchased.

Once the company completes their work, this will enable the plumber and tiler to proceed.

#### 10 November 2025

Response received with supporting evidence, photographs x 26.

1. We have installed a new water heater in the play barn.
2. This chair has been removed.
3. New boxes were purchased and placed in the designated area.
4. We have installed splashback over all sinks.

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	<p>5. Towel rail now removed.</p> <p>6. This anchor is firmly in place.</p> <p>7. The toilets in the Play Barn have now been fully renovated, piping covered, water, heating, floor, toilet and sinks installed.</p> <p>8. All piping is now covered.</p>
<b>Summary Comment:</b>	Following review of the submitted photographic evidence, the inspectorate is satisfied the requirement for Regulation 23 has been met.

### 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.

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

(1)

Current certification in relation to First Aid Response (FAR) training is available for one staff member. Both registered providers have up to date first aid certificates.

(2)(a)(b)

The first aid equipment in each room was safely stored, easily accessible and in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms. All boxes were suitably equipped and immediately available to the adults caring for the children at all times.

### 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.

#### Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

(1)(a)

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	<p>Documentation is available to record monthly fire drills.</p> <p>(b)</p> <p>The firefighting equipment and smoke/fire detection alarm system was serviced February 2025 and 6 June 2025 respectively. A service contract is in place.</p> <p>(4)</p> <p>A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was clearly displayed within the service.</p>
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### Part VI – Safety

#### Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is met.

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 1 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 95 children.

### Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 – Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Requirement met:

The requirement is partially met.

(a)

The registered providers have stated the buildings are maintained in a state of good repair.

(b)

The main entrance gates to the premises are electromagnetically secure with key-pad access and are controlled by staff to prevent unauthorised access to the service and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. The main entrance door to building ‘B’ is secured with a thumb turn lock on the inside. The outdoor play area is surrounded by a boundary wall.

	<p>(c)</p> <p>Each pre-school room benefits from natural light via large windows and supplemental artificial lighting is provided from ceiling strip lights in each room. Window coverings are in place in the sleep room to support a dimmed environment for the comfort of sleeping children.</p> <p>There are openable windows and doors in each pre-school room, sanitary area and the sleep room.</p> <p>Electric ceiling mounted heat plates are in place throughout the service to heat the building. Environmental room temperatures were recorded and maintained between the recommended 18-22°Celsius; this also included the sleep room.</p> <p>(d)</p> <p>Daily cleaning schedules are in place for all room environments.</p> <p>(e)</p> <p>The current sanitary facilities in building 'A' include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 adult toilet</li> <li>• 2 children's toilets</li> <li>• 1 nappy change unit</li> <li>• A trough type sink unit with 3 sets of taps at children's height</li> </ul> <p>The current sanitary facilities in building 'B' include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1 adult toilet</li> <li>• 2 children's toilets</li> <li>• 2 nappy change units</li> <li>• One adult wash hand basin and two child sized wash hand basins.</li> </ul>
<b>Requirement not met:</b>	<p>(c)</p> <p>1. There is no natural or mechanical ventilation in the proposed additional sanitary area in the Play Barn building and there was no heat source in this area; the environmental temperature was recorded at 16.8°Celsius at 11:05am and not maintained between the recommended 18-22°Celsius.</p>

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	<p>(d)</p> <p>2. The following maintenance issues were identified in the proposed additional sanitary accommodation in the Play Barn building:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The first sink of three had a large crack in the porcelain bowl</li> <li>• The cold tap on the middle sink was not functioning</li> <li>• There were gaps around the outlet pipes beneath each sink; this was a potential access point for vermin</li> <li>• The area was observed with a build-up of cobwebs and dust particularly around the rafter area where the wall was not flush with the ceiling</li> </ul> <p>3. Several areas on the walls of the pre-school rooms and the sanitary areas throughout buildings 'A' and 'B' required repainting and/or repair following damage from the removal of wall mounted equipment, this also included the sleep and sensory rooms.</p> <p>4. A hole was observed in the ceiling in part of the sleep room and required repair.</p> <p>5. An electric wire was exposed and tied up on the wall in the sleep room and required to be covered/removed.</p> <p>6. An outlet pipe was left uncovered in the wall at floor level, following the removal of sink unit in the sanitary area of building 'A'; this was a potential access point for vermin.</p> <p>(e)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One additional toilet and one additional wash hand basin for adults is required as there are 18 adults employed. Currently, two toilets and two wash hand basins are available.</li> <li>• One additional wash hand basin is required in the sanitary area of building 'A', and two additional wash hand basins are required in building 'B' sanitary area.</li> </ul>
<b>Response from Provider:</b>	<p><b><u>29 August 2025</u></b></p> <p>Response received with supporting evidence, documents x 3.</p>

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	<p>We have booked in a company to come next week to carry out a Core Hole for the bathrooms.</p> <p>Two further sinks have been purchased.</p> <p>The painter is due to come back and finish the second building in the coming weeks.</p> <p><b><u>10 November 2025</u></b></p> <p>Response received with supporting evidence, photographs x 12.</p> <p>(c)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ventilation has been installed in the Play Barn toilets.</li> </ol> <p>(d)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. In the Play Barn, a new radiator and sink have been installed with thermostatically control water heater, all pipes covered, and the ceiling is now covered.</li> <li>3. All rooms have been repainted.</li> <li>4. The hole in the ceiling of the sleep room has been repaired.</li> <li>5. The exposed electric wire is now repaired.</li> <li>6. The outlet pipe that was left uncovered is now covered.</li> </ol> <p>(e)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>7. As there are only sixteen staff currently employed, we have the required number of toilets and handbasins installed.</li> <li>8. The additional hand basins are now installed in building A and building B.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Summary Comment:</b></p>	<p>Following review of the submitted photographic evidence, the inspectorate is satisfied the requirement for Regulation 29 (c), (d) and (e) have been met.</p>

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### Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

#### Requirement met:

(1), (2)

The clear floor space provided for the work, play and movement of children to attend the service, on a sessional or full day care basis, is a maximum of **87** and **75** respectively, following the additional installation of further sanitary facilities.

Please see **Table 1** below:

**Table 1**

#### Building 'A'

Room	Room 1 Front (OAK)	Room 2 Back (BEECH)
Clear floor space	50 m <sup>2</sup>	49.1 m <sup>2</sup>
Proposed age range	2-6 years	2-6 years
Maximum number children	27 Sessional 21 Full day care	27 Sessional 21 Full day care

#### Building 'B'

Room	Room 1 Front (ASH)	Room 2 Back (Hazel)
Clear floor space	30 m <sup>2</sup>	55 m <sup>2</sup>
Proposed age range	1-2 years	2-3 years

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	<b>Maximum number children</b>	<b>10 (FDC)</b>	<b>23 (FDC)</b>	
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