

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE196
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Name of Service:	Early Learners Creche, Pre-school & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Timolin, Moone, Athy, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	R14 VH94
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Name of Registered Provider:	Clare Doran
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	23
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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
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

Early Learners Crèche is a privately operated full-day-care service for children aged between 1 and 6 years. It opens Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6:00pm. The service also offers a sessional service for 38 weeks of the year from 9.00am to 12.00pm and 12.15pm to 3.15pm. The service is registered to accommodate 44 children. The service operates from a purposely adapted former school premises and comprises of three care rooms, a separate sleep room, sanitary accommodation and a small kitchen. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is located to the rear and front of the premises.

Staffing

There are six staff currently employed to work directly with the children including the registered provider. There is also a cook employed to work in the service. On the day of inspection there were eight staff present including the cook.

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 15 – Record of a preschool child

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to a preschool service.

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of the child

Regulation 23 – Safety

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures

On inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29, Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 15 and 16.

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, 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.

(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

The recruitment records of all staff were reviewed.

(2)

(a)(b)

Of the eighteen references required, sixteen were from a past employer and two from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. The registered provider ensured that they complied with the Regulatory notice to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for one adult who required it.

(4)

Records were available to evidence that all adults employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day of inspection, six adults were allocated to work directly with thirty four children in the morning and five adults worked with twenty three children in the afternoon.

(2) At all times the minimum ratios of adults to children were maintained during the period of inspection.

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) A sample of ten records were reviewed by the inspector.

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above regulation for all the records reviewed.

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) A written record was available in each care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.

(i) A staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection.

(j) A sample of eight written records of administration of medication were available and reviewed and contained pre-consent and all relevant details of the medication being administered and required signatures,

(k) A sample of ten written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were reviewed on the day of inspection, all of the records contained the required information.

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-

(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

(1)(b) The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff stated that all meals are provided daily by the service. A hot meal is served daily to children attending part-time and full day care hours which is prepared on site by a cook. Drinks were accessible to the children in the care rooms at all times. Children were encouraged to assist in the preparation for lunch time, handing out cutlery and drinks to their peers. Staff members sat with the children engaged in conversation during mealtimes.

Older children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Children requiring nappy changes were changed regularly and when required. Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspector and were engaged with the children throughout the inspection. Comfort was offered to children promptly when required. The children appeared happy and content at their play activities throughout the inspection and were provided with freedom of choice in the materials they wished to use.

Staff supported the children to wash their hands and clean their noses at appropriate times during the inspection. Children were encouraged to take turns assisting with tasks in the care rooms to promote independence. Rest areas were available so the children could take time away from the group or rest if required. Children who required sleep were facilitated when tired and a set sleep time was also available.

Staff were observed supporting the children, offering reassurance and praise during play and used prompts to extend and enhance play and learning.

Three large outdoor areas were available to the children however, due to inclement weather children did not access the outdoor area on the day of inspection however, staff stated they usually access the outdoor area daily.

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

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children as outlined in the examples below:

General Safety:

The service was adequately secured with a bell entry system at the door to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. All cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored safely out of reach of children. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities were in a clean condition. Staff members were observed cleaning the floors and cleaning the tables after meals and messy play. The wash hand basins were equipped with liquid soap and warm water to support effective handwashing. Disposable hand towels and hand dryers were available to dry hands. Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal-operated, lidded bins throughout the service. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned.

Administration of Medication:

A medication policy was in place in the service. Care plans were in place for children attending the service who required emergency medication. Written records of medication administered to children was available for inspection and contained all the relevant information, was administered as per the instructions and signed witness signatures were available.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

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)

A person with current first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous position.

(b) The first aid box was always available for use.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place on the 20th December 2024.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on the 25th April 2024, and that maintenance of the fire detection and alarm system had also taken place on the same day.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
- The registered provider did not ensure that parts of the premises were adequately heated ventilated on the day of inspection as outlined below;
1. The inspector observed that there was mould growth/spores visible in both the Caterpillar and Cocoon rooms. Mould growth was observed that there was significant mould growth on the walls, ceilings, and around the window frames in the Caterpillar room and around the window frames in the Cocoon room. Significant mould spores were observed in both toilet 1 and 2 in the Caterpillar room on the walls.
 2. A damp malodour was noted throughout the day of inspection in the entrance hall, the Caterpillar room, the sanitary accommodation in the Caterpillar room and the Cocoon room.
 3. The room temperature recorded in the Caterpillar room at 9.44am was 16.5°C which is below the required temperature range of 18°C-22°C.
 4. The room temperature recorded in the Cocoon room at 10.43am was 16.9°C which is below the required temperature range of 18°C-22°C.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All mould growth was cleaned on the walls, ceilings and around the window frames within the Caterpillar Room with specific mould cleaner. All of these areas were painted with mould resistant paint and repainted with magnolia as per the wall colour of the room.
All mould growth was cleaned around the window frames within the Cocoon Room with specific mould cleaner. All of these areas were painted with mould resistant paint and repainted with magnolia as per the wall colour of the room.
All mould growth was cleaned upon the walls within toilet 1 & 2 in the caterpillar room with specific mould cleaner. All of these areas were painted with mould resistant paint and repainted with magnolia as per the wall colour of the room.

A thorough check of all of these areas for any further mould growth was carried out which thankfully did not identify any new growth.

This has been added to our daily risk assessment of each area within the building for the checking of mould and also ventilation.

2. Deep clean of all areas Caterpillar Room, Cocoon Room and sanitary areas alongside daily ventilation through the opening of windows, ventilation has been added to our daily risk assessment of all areas.

3. and 4. Thermometers were purchased for each care room to ensure that correct temperatures are maintained at all times throughout the building. Room temperature checks have been added to the daily risk assessments.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photos of all the areas located with mould growth sent to the inspector after treatment and painting.
2. Copy of the daily risk assessment submitted.
- 3 & 4. Photo of thermometer and copy of daily risk assessments.

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 29.