

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015KK026
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	First Impressions
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Willow Pond House, Tinvaun, Stonyford, Co Kilkenny.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R95 HR5V
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Marie O' Shea
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	19/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	11	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Ely Hospital, Wexford.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Mc Garry
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This sessional service is located in a rural setting just outside the village of Stoneyford in county Kilkenny. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Thursday between 9.00 am and 12.30 pm for 41 weeks of the year. The premises is a purpose-built single-storey facility built on the grounds of the registered provider's home.

### Staffing

There were two staff employed in the service including the registered provider who also works directly with the children. Both staff held the minimum of level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

### Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 10 Policies and Procedures,

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (3),

Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child,

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

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),  
Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).  
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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

(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

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The registered provider was the person in charge on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were two staff employed in the service. There was a person on the roster who was identified as a relief staff member. Written and validated references were available on file for all staff working in the service.

- (c)  
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members and relief staff. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for one staff member. Please see regulation 23 for further information.
- (d)  
Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)  
There were qualifications on file for all staff working directly with the children. These staff held an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Qualifications Framework.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

*A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.*

#### Compliance Information

There were policies and procedures in place in the service specified in Schedule 5 of these regulations. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the policy on behaviour management and the policy on settling in the children in the service. Both these policies were found to be complete and specific to the service.

## Part III – Management and Staff

### Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

*(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)  
There were at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with children.
- (3)  
During the morning session there were 11 children in the care of 2 staff including the registered provider who also worked directly with the children.

## 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 registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of activities during the inspection including going for a walk and enjoying circle time. Interactions between children were well managed by the staff who were caring for them. For example, staff were observed to be kind and attentive while helping the children to remove their wet gear and wellies when they came in from their nature walk.

Children were given time to express themselves and talk about aspects of nature they had observed on their walk. There was excitement expressed as children spoke about a robin they sometimes saw on their nature walk. There was a curriculum in place and observations had been carried out on individual children. There was evidence of a key worker system in the service. Each child was given a specific staff member who was responsible for carrying out observations on individual children in the service. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this system enhanced communication with parents to ensure important information on each child's development in the service was shared directly with parents.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development. For example, children used the toilet independently and were given help if required.

During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. For example, there were conversations encouraged between the children and their friends. Children who were shy were encouraged to share their ideas and children who were more confident were encouraged to wait and take their turn when sharing their news with the group. Staff were observed to be skilled in facilitating equality and turn taking in the group of children attending on the day of the inspection.

The preschool room was well resourced with a range of toys and equipment for the children's learning and enjoyment. For example, there was a shop, a dolls house, dinosaurs, dolls and buggies, and shelves containing a selection of jigsaws, books and plastic bricks. There was a cosy rest area with cushions beside a corner window area. There was a wall of family photos. There were drying racks to allow original artwork done by the children to dry out before being displayed in the room. Children took delight in showing their family members to the inspector.

### 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:

The external door was secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised people gaining access to the service. Access was gained to the service by ringing a bell. The outdoor area was safe, suitable and secure.

##### Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy. Children were observed washing their hands after using the toilet and after messy play. The service was clean with no obvious maintenance required.

### **Accident and incidents**

The service had a policy on the management of accidents and incidents in the service. Previous records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were reviewed by the inspector. Records were signed by parents and were in line with the policy in place in the service.

### **Outings**

The service does not accommodate outings.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

The Garda vetting for one staff member and a relief staff member had not been renewed in the past 3 years as required in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff and registered providers. It is acknowledged the required in date vetting for both staff was received shortly after the inspection and is now available on file in the service.

### **Action submitted by the Registered Provider**

#### **Corrective & Preventive Action**

The required in date garda vetting is now available on file in the service. The registered provider will ensure all required Garda vetting is updated every three years as required.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Copies of Garda vetting for both staff was received by the inspector.

### **Summary Comment**

The response and evidence received is satisfactory to meet the requirements of The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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)

There was a person trained in a first aid responder course and available to cover the roster in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the preschool 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)

There was a template in place in the service to record any fire drill that takes place in the service. The last fire drill took place in service in February 2026.

(b)

There was a record stating the smoke alarm and firefighting equipment was last serviced in July 2025.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.