

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK086
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Name of Service:	The Wishing Well Crèche
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Address of Service:	Glenvale, Ballyragget, Co. Kilkenny
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Eircode:	R95 D932
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen O'Regan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	37	PM	29
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.
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Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 Wishing Well Creche is a private registered full day childcare service in Ballyraggett in north county Kilkenny. The service provides a sessional Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) service, part-time and full day childcare services for children aged 0 to 6 years. It operates from a purpose-built premises between the hours of 07:45 to 18:00 hours, Monday to Friday. The service contains five pre-school classrooms, two sleep rooms and four outdoor play areas which can be directly accessed from each of the classrooms.

Staffing

There were fifteen staff members employed in the service including the registered provider and a designated kitchen staff member. A student in early childhood care and education was also present in the service on the day of inspection. All staff members, who as part of the role in the service, were employed to directly with the pre-school children held qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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 assessment of compliance under the following regulations 9, 11, 15, 20, 22, 23,25, 26, and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 15 and 20. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the four classrooms in operation on the day and the outdoor play areas.

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.

(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

(1)(a) The deputy designated person in charge was onsite on the inspector's arrival at the service. The registered provider arrived onsite at 09:30 hours.

(b) The staff roster that was provided to the inspector demonstrated that there was always the registered provider, designated person in charge or a named deputy designated person in charge onsite while the service was in operation.

(c) A clear visual outline of the management of the structure in the service was displayed in entrance hall of the service, identifying the lines of authority, accountability, the roles, and responsibilities of individual staff members in the service.

(2) Staff files for 15 staff members and 1 student were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available on file for each staff member, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting certificates were available on file, for each staff member employed in the service, for the registered provider and student on placement. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) A police vetting disclosure certificate was on file for one staff member employed in the service, who had lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

(4) Certificates of qualifications were available for each staff member, who as part of their role were working directly with the children, demonstrating that each staff member held at least a minimum Level 5 to Level 9 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national QQI 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.

(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) (1) Throughout the inspection, there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The following adult to child ratios were observed in each of the five preschool classrooms that were in operation during the inspection.

The Baby Room- There were 4 children aged 9 to 15 months directly cared for by 2 staff members. In the afternoon 3 children aged 12 to 15 months remained with two staff members directly caring for them.

Wobbler Room 1- There were five children aged 18 months to 2 years cared for by 1 staff member throughout the day.

Wobbler Room 2- There were five children aged 2 years to 2 years 8 months cared for by 1 staff member throughout the day.

Junior Preschool Room –Throughout the morning there were 12 children aged 2 years and 8 months to 4 years cared for by 3 staff members. In the afternoon 9 children remained directly cared for by 2 staff members

Senior Preschool Room- In the morning there were 11 children aged 4 to 5 years of age cared for by 3 staff members and in the afternoon 7 children remained directly cared for by 2 staff members.

(8)(a) On review of the staff roster and in discussion with the registered provider and staff the inspector was assured that there were always at least two adults on the premises while children were in attendance in the service.

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.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of a sample of 12 pre-school children's records, the inspector observed that particulars (a) to (j) as required by regulation 15 were clearly recorded.

(4) The registered provider demonstrated how preschool records are stored securely and appropriately for a period of two years after a child ceases to attend the service.

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 19 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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Each of the five classrooms contained age-appropriate equipment and play materials that complimented the interest areas created for the children. The baby room provided clear floor space for the young children to crawl, a ballet bar with mirrored wall for the children to observe themselves pulling up and standing, activity centres to promote motor skills and finger dexterity. A soft quiet corner area had soft fluffy pillows, and toys with a supply of textured and sensory books for the children to rest and relax in. Adult seating provided opportunities for the staff and children to sit and read together or allowed time for children to be comforted and cuddled.

The classrooms for the older children all contained similar interest areas such as home/kitchen corners, creativity areas, construction spaces, reading areas that were created specifically for the age of the children in each classroom. Special structures such as a wooden shop and post office provided extra areas for imaginary play in the senior preschool room.

(b) There were two designated sleep rooms available in the service. One sleep room directly adjacent to the baby room contained five standard cots and a second sleep room adjacent to wobbler room 2 contained an additional five standard cots. Both sleep rooms were observed to be clean and tidy with appropriate EU safety standard approved cot mattresses, cellular blankets and fitted cot sheets in use. A supply of clean bed linen was also readily available for changing when required. Both sleep rooms were naturally ventilated with windows that could be opened to allow air to circulate. A thermometer in each sleep room recorded temperatures to ensure that the sleep room temperatures were maintained between the required temperatures of 16-20°C for children under one year and 18-22 °C where children over one year were sleeping.

(3) Since the service's last inspection on 05 December 2023 the registered provider had further developed two narrow outdoor areas at the back of the building specifically for the baby and wobbler rooms, which could be directly accessed from these rooms. The outdoor play area directly accessed from the wobbler rooms contained a spacious sand box, seated area and gardening area on an artificial grass surface. The baby room's outdoor area which also had an artificial grass surface, had padded outdoor walls, a soft seated area and small ride on toys. Mirrored trees on the walls provided children with opportunities to observe all the various perspectives of the outdoor area and allowed them to watch and communicate with the wobbler room children in the adjacent outdoor play area. The older children each had access to a more spacious outdoor play area, where they could run, use their balance bikes and ride-on toys. Both the large outdoor area and are outside the junior preschool room contained outdoor mud kitchens and growing boxes.

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.

Compliance Information

Each of the classes ensured that the children had access to their individual drink bottles or to a fresh glass of water when needed throughout the day. The smaller children had their drinks bottles clearly labelled, and staff were observed to be aware of ensuring they had regular drinks of water throughout the day from their correct bottle or cup. Meals were supplied to the service from an outside approved company, with daily menus of the hot meals provided in the service displayed at reception for parents to see each week. The registered provider explained to the inspector that they felt it was important for parents/ guardians to know what menu was offered in the service in advance so that children were not having the same meal at home later.

The menus provided by the food company provided details of all ingredients and offered alternatives for children with special dietary requirements. There was a designated kitchen area and kitchen staff onsite to ensure that all food products were stored and prepared appropriately.

At snack time children brought their own snacks from home, which were observed to consist of healthy alternatives such as yogurts, meat, cheese or salad sandwiches

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 service was secured with a keypad call bell system, at the main entrance door, which the staff could respond to from inside the service. A clear transparent window in the main door allowed staff to see any parents or visitors calling to the service prior to access to the service being authorised by a staff member. The perimeter of the service, including all the outdoor play areas, was secured by a ten-foot-high cement block wall. This assisted in preventing any unauthorised person from entering the service and to mitigate against a child exiting the service unsupervised.

The inspector observed that all cleaning materials and equipment were stored safely away from the children in a separate safe storage area.

Infection Control:

There was an adequate number of toilet and nappy changing facilities provided throughout the service to meet the needs of the children in attendance.

Each toilet unit had child height handwash basins, supplied with liquid hand soap and paper towelling, which the children could easily access and use. The older children were observed to use the toilets and hand washing facilities independently, while staff supported and assisted the younger children as needed.

Staff were observed to support and prompt the children to wash their hands correctly if needed after using the toilet, post nappy-changing, after messy and outdoor play, and before snack times.

Staff were observed to carry out nappy changing procedures in line with the service's nappy changing policy and in adherence with the service's hand washing and infection control policy.

Administration of Medication:

Staff were well informed of their responsibilities and procedures for safe administration of any medication to children in the service. Staff assured the inspector and demonstrated that child centred care plans were on record and available to staff for any child prescribed with specialised medication for diagnosed medical conditions. Staff were also reassuring in the knowledge they demonstrated regarding administration of anti-febrile medication to children with high temperatures in accordance with the service's administration of medication policy.

Safe Sleep:

The inspector observed staff members ensured all safe sleep practices were carried out and recorded on each sleeping child in accordance with the service's safe sleep policy. A sleeping child's colour, sleep position and breathing were recorded every ten minutes.

Outing:

The registered provider had an outings policy in the event of any outings away from the service, which all staff were well informed of.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of records maintained and in discussion with the staff and registered provider, the inspector was reassured that each child attending the service has their time of arrival to the service and departure time from the service recorded daily.

(3)(a) Staff ensured that no person other than a pre-school child, person dropping or collecting a child, an employee or unpaid worker could enter the premises unauthorised.

(b) A daily record of any visitors to the service was maintained and the inspector was requested to ensure that they recorded the details of their inspection visit.

(4) The registered provider demonstrated that the records were retained for a period of at least one year.

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 were three staff members employed in the service with current certification in the required first aid responder (FAR) training for children. At all times while the service was operating, the roster demonstrated that a staff member with FAR training was onsite.

(2)(a)(b) A dedicated first aid box was available on an accessible shelf for staff to access at reception. Records demonstrated that its contents were checked monthly and replaced if necessary.

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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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) The following records were maintained.

(a) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 12 August 2025.

(b) The registered provider maintained a record of the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The last maintenance check for the fire-fighting equipment was recorded as having taken place in June 2025 and for the smoke alarm system was recorded as having taken place on 29 August 2025.

(2) The fire safety records were available and open for inspection by the early years inspector or by a parent / employee on request.

(3) The registered provider demonstrated that records were maintained for the five years prior to inspection.

(4) The registered provider ensured that a fire procedure notice was clearly displayed in the main entrance hall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was a current insurance certificate for the service displayed on a notice board in the main entrance hall. The insurance certificate detailed insurance cover for a full day care service provision for a maximum of 45 early years children and covered the period from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.

It is acknowledged that while the service is currently registered to accommodate a maximum number of 60 preschool children there is currently a maximum number of 45 preschool children attending the service. The registered provider informed the inspector that the insurance company were informed of this.