

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LD030
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Name of Service:	Granard Community Childcare Facility
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Address of Service:	The Hill, Granard, Co. Longford
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Eircode:	N39 TF25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline O Reilly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan and F. Maher.
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

Granard Community Childcare Facility was established in 1991 as a community non-profit service. The service offers full day-care, part-time care and sessional provision from 08.00 am to 18.00 hrs, for children aged between 0 to 6 years, from Monday to Friday. School age care is also provided.

There are six pre-school rooms, an office area, reception areas, two sleep rooms, storage areas and a kitchen in the service. The outdoor play area is located at the side and rear of the premises.

Parking and set down is available outside the premises on the public road.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and was not present for the inspection.

Twenty-eight adults are employed in the service. On the day of the inspection there were eighteen adults present and of these, fourteen were working directly with the children, the person in charge and a floating child care practitioner provided additional support to the care rooms as needed; a cook was employed to prepare food for the children daily and a maintenance person was onsite.

All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8, or a qualification recognised as equivalent on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 21 – Equipment and Materials.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Creche, Snowdrops, Playschool and Preschool rooms.

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 inspectors 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

(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.*

(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),(b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability, this was displayed in the entrance hall of the service.

The files of twenty-eight staff were reviewed.

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of twenty-one adults employed and one written and verified reference from a past employer or from a reputable source was on file for seven further staff members.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for twenty-eight adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for six adults who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) Twenty-four adults employed and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) There were forty-seven children attending the service and they were supervised directly by fifteen adults. This included the person available to provide relief to the care rooms as needed.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for 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:

(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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)
(f) It is acknowledged that written health care plans were in place however the written health care plans for seven children attending the service did not contain all the information required to ensure the safe management of the child in the event they became unwell or required emergency administration of medication.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(f) New health care plans have been completed for the children who require them. Hardcopy and electronic versions of these are available. The electronic versions are accessible on our early year's software application. Management will ensure health care plans are completed upon enrolment for relevant children and immediately when they are made aware of any child in the service with an illness, disability or special needs. These will be reviewed every 3 months.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(f) Two examples of updated health care plans.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 15(1)(f).

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

- Plates were not available to the children in the 'Creche room' during snack time as they were observed eating their food directly from the table.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- The staff members were reminded that children must always be served their snack and meals on plates and it not acceptable to place the food directly on the table.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photograph.

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 21.

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 entrance door to the service was electronically secured and managed by staff members to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The service had a system in place to manage maintenance issues. A maintenance person was onsite on the day of the inspection carrying out maintenance.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Facilities were available for nappy changing and foot pedal nappy change bins were in place for the disposal of used nappies. Written cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection, written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required safe practice when administering medication in the service. All medicine including medication for children who required it for a health issue, was safely stored.

Safe Sleep:

There were two sleep rooms with twelve cots provided for children less than 2 years of age. Eight low level sleep beds were available for all children aged over 2 years who slept at a designated time. There was an adequate number of cots to provide needs led sleep for young children. The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance and the required care of sleeping children. It was observed that 10-minute sleep check observations were completed on all sleeping children and the staff documented the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children in their care.

Comfortable rest areas were available for the children in each care room if they wished to take a break from activities and rest

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The internal fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

The service does not conduct outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The outdoor area was not secured to prevent unauthorised entry as evidenced by the following observations:
 - A concrete stairway from the car park on the upper level provided direct access to the outdoor area. Metal gates placed at the top and bottom of the stairway were not of sufficient height to prevent unauthorised entry and were secured with a sliding bolt that could be easily accessed from outside.
 - The sliding bolt on the gate located on the left-hand side of the premises, was on the top outer edge of the gate and therefore did not prevent unauthorised entry. This gate also provided direct access to the outdoor area.
 - A wooden gate in the outdoor area used by the 'Snowdrops room' was not of sufficient height to prevent unauthorised entry as there were foot holds located on an adjacent metal fence which could be used to enable entry over the wooden gate.
2. A plastic storage bench seat was observed located adjacent to the boundary wall in the outdoor area and was a risk of injury to a child should they stand on the seat and accidentally fall over the wall which had a drop height of approximately 7/8 feet into an adjoining private home. It is acknowledged immediate corrective action was taken by the staff members in the outdoor area when it was brought to their attention by the inspector; the seat was removed and relocated to a safer area.

Infection Control:

3. There was a lack of clarity around the process of cleaning and sterilising of soothers, toys and other equipment in the 'Creche room'. While a container of sterilising solution was available on the day of the inspection, there was no date when it was made up or the concentration of sterilising solution used for the container volume. This area of practice needs to be reviewed for infection control purposes.
4. Soothers were left in the steam steriliser following sterilisation until required for use. This was not suitable for infection control and each soother required to be placed in an individual labelled container after sterilisation.

Fire Safety:

- A padlock used to secure the wooden gate in the outdoor area used by the 'Snowdrops room'. The key was placed on hook on a door frame in the 'Snowdrops room' which was unsuitable in an emergency situation if 'Snowdrops room' could not be accessed. This could potentially delay the evacuation of the children in the event of a fire or other emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- A combination lock has been added to the gate located on the left side of the premises which prevents unauthorised entry to the premises. The gates at the top and bottom of the concrete stairs and the gate located in the Snowdrop's outdoor area will be permanently raised to prevent unauthorised entry. All works completed to raise the height of the gates.
- The storage bench was immediately removed on the day of inspection and has remained in the new location in front of the wall. This has been added to the outdoor risk assessment to ensure that the bench is located in a safe area and not placed against the fence.

Infection Control:

- The staff members have all been reminded that sterilising solution is made up as per manufacturer's guidelines. This will continue to be changed minimum every 24 hours. Signage is now in place.
- Individual soother boxes have been purchased and labelled for each individual child. The soothers will be placed directly into the child's box following sterilisation. The individual soother boxes will be used going forward following sterilisation to ensure infection control.

Fire Safety:

- A combination lock has been placed on the gate in Snowdrop's outdoor area and the previous lock has been discarded.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographs of combination lock and completed works on the gates identified in the inspection report.
- Photograph of new bench placement in outdoor area; revised outdoor checklist document.

Infection Control:

- Photograph of manufacturers guidelines on how to make up sterilising solution correctly and sterilising basin.
- Soother boxes labelled with each child's name.

Fire Safety:

5. Photograph of combination lock on gate.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the manager on behalf of the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (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) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the electronic attendance records maintained in each care room.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a),(b) The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The manager documented the inspectors' visit to the service in the visitor's book on arrival.
- (4) The manager confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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) Staff members present were trained in in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care rooms inspected. Further supplies were stored in the main office.
 - (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes for children were available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the 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 firefighting 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) A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 6 May 2025.
 - (b)
- A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was serviced in October 2024, and the smoke alarm was last serviced on 6 May 2025.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the entrance hallway and rooms of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the adults caring for them both indoors in their care rooms, using the sanitary area and during transitions.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 25 January 2026. The insurance provided cover for 106 children.