

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK096
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Name of Service:	Northside FRC Riverside Early Childhood Centre
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Address of Service:	Riverside Early Childhood Centre Saint Ita Street Saint Mary's Park Limerick
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Eircode:	V94P6W8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Kane
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	24th March 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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

This community-based service was established in 2011. It operates a full day care service from 08:00 –17:30 hrs for children aged 0-6 years, Monday – Friday from a purpose-built facility and offers a play-based curriculum. Children are accommodated in four different rooms according to their age group, i.e. playgroup room, wobblers room, toddler room and pre-school room. There is one sleep room in the service, and children also rotate to the main entrance hall, which is a large space for the children to play in. Children have access to sanitary accommodation areas, and outdoor play facilities are located directly off each playroom. A full-time outdoor play group is available to children who attend the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE scheme) Monday to Friday 09.30 – 12.30 hrs. Appropriate all weather clothing and wellingtons are worn by both the children and the staff when required. Children have their snacks and dinners outdoors in a sheltered space which was specifically built for this purpose. Heating, toilet facilities, hot water and a changing room are available in the outdoor play space.

Staffing

There are fifteen staff working directly with the children in the service which includes the person in charge. All staff employed in the service have childcare qualifications which range from QQI Level 5 to Level 9. The adults engaged in on-going professional development including first aid training, manual handling and fire safety training. The registered provider does not work on site. Additional support workers such as a play therapist and family support worker are available on site to work with children, families and staff.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,19,24,25,26 and 28.

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 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge or the deputy person in charge were available on the premises and were documented on the staff roster.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority, roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The registered provider had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent as the following documents were available on file for all staff employed.

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References from reputable sources in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures were available from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of 24 staff. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the early years inspectorate regulatory notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for two staff who had lived in another State for a period of longer than six months.

(3) All vetting procedures were completed before staff commenced work in the service.

(4) All staff working directly with the children had the required childcare qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The adult/child ratio on the day of the inspection was greater than the minimum requirements of the regulations.

- There were 48 pre-school children aged 1 to 4 years being supervised by 12 staff in the morning.
- There were 38 pre-school children aged 1 to 4 years being supervised by 12 staff in the afternoon.

Playroom – There were 3 children (2-3 years) and 1 staff present.

Wobblers Room - There were 9 children (1- 2 years) and 2 staff present.

Toddler Room - There were 11 children (2-3 years) and 2 staff present.

Preschool Room - There were 10 children (3-4 years) and 2 staff present.

Preschool Outdoors - There were 15 children (3 years) and 3 staff present.

Additional staff were available to cover for staff breaks /office management, and kitchen duties.

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) BASIC NEEDS:

The service provided dinner for the children which was prepared on site by the cook and corresponded with the healthy eating policy and menu plan of the service. All children who attended the service on a sessional, part-time or full-time basis had a hot meal every day. Food observed on the day of the inspection included: pasta, ham and white sauce for dinner, and in the afternoon a snack of soup and brown bread was served. Platters of fresh fruit were available and drinking water was available throughout the day if a child needed a drink. The children sat together around the tables and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food. Children who were toilet trained toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it. Nappy changing took place by staff in the sanitary accommodation in line with the nappy changing policy, and staff were observed to wear gloves and aprons. Staff were observed to wash their hands before and after nappy changing which helped prevent the spread of infection. The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap. Children were allowed to move freely indoors and outdoors from one activity to the next for specific periods of time. Quiet/rest areas were developed in each room where children could sit and relax in. The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the pre-school rooms. There was a plentiful supply of play props available to support sensorial play. Play equipment was placed in baskets and boxes on the floor to make it more accessible to the children. The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. The adults modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were praised for their good behaviour. Interactions with the children were positive and caring. Children were praised, encouraged and listened to. The key person system was evident in each room of the service, and each room had a team leader which supported children to form and sustain secure relationships with the adults. The setting was integrated within the local community as the younger children were observed on the day of the inspection to be taken in buggies for walks locally.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

A full-time outdoor play group was available to the children who attended the early childhood care and education scheme Monday to Friday 09.30 – 12.30 hrs. Children spent all of their time outdoors playing with the emphasis being on risky and challenging play. Appropriate all weather clothing and wellingtons were worn by both the children and the staff. Children had their snacks and dinners outdoors in a sheltered house which was specifically built for this purpose. Heating, toilet facilities, hot water and a changing room were available in this shelter. Children were observed playing in cubby houses, at mud kitchens, with trucks, riding on trikes, swinging on swings and playing 'catch'. There were four playrooms available to the pre-school children. Smaller groups of children were observed to play in the large open space in the reception area while being supervised by their key worker. This service provided a range of developmentally appropriate experiences for the children attending. The range of toys offered stimulation to all the senses. Materials used included sensory, cause and effect, symbolic and imaginative play, which supported all areas of development. Materials and equipment were freely accessible to the children when needed, for example crayons, paper and paint were available throughout the session, artwork was displayed, and items of interest were at the child's eye level on low level shelving. There were areas of interest such as home corner, library/rest area, sand play, musical instruments, jigsaws shelf, montessori materials and construction areas evident in the service.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Each child who attended the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member on a childcare app on arrival and on departure.

(3)(a) No persons other than the following could enter the service without being approved by a staff member

- (i) A pre-school child attending the service.
- (ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.
- (iii) An employee.
- (iv) An unpaid worker.

(b) A visitor book was maintained which recorded the name of every adult who entered the service, the time they spent in the service, the reason they entered, contact phone numbers and the person who allowed them to enter.

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 staff present that had completed the current first aid response certification for children.
- (2)(a) First aid boxes were accessible and safely stored in the service.
- (b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

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) The fire drills were practiced monthly and the last recorded fire drill took place in March 2025.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in August 2024, and a record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The fire and smoke alarm system were tested and serviced in December 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended and had an expiry date of 27 March 2026.