

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK140		
Name of Service:	Patrickswell Community Playschool		
Address of Service:	Patrickswell National School, Patrickswell, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V94 XW72		
Name of Registered Provider:	Nora Twohig		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	21/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Offices of Early Years Inspectorate, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan		
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		

Description of service

Patrickswell Community Playschool is a community sessional preschool service located on the grounds of Patrickswell National School in County Limerick. It provides a pre-school class every Monday to Friday from 09.20 hrs to 12.50hrs. The sessional service can cater for up to a maximum of 22 pre-school children at any one time. A service for school aged children is offered each afternoon.

The service operates from a large, well-resourced playroom. A second room is used each afternoon by the school aged children. Children have daily access to the school playground for outdoor play activities. An outdoor area for the exclusive use of the preschool children has recently been added to the service.

Staffing

The registered provider of the service is the chairperson of the community pre-school committee. There is a designated manager and 3 staff working at the service.

All staff at the pre-school have achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. The designated person in charge has completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in early childhood care and education settings.

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.

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

(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) The registered provider who is the committee chairperson has appointed a designated person in charge.

There was a named person who could deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were written references, from past employers, available in respect of all staff members employed at the service, with recorded validations for each reference.

(b) All references were from past employers.

(3) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available in respect of each staff member working at 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 not required as none of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction.

(4) Each staff member held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) The service operates a morning session starting at 9.20am and finishing at 12.50pm. The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.
- (3) There were 15 preschool children with 4 adults attending the morning session. The adult child ratio was above the requirements of the regulations.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

A healthy eating policy was implemented within the service, ensuring children had nutritious meals and snacks in preschool each day. Perishable foods were appropriately stored in a refrigerator, and drinking water remained accessible to children at all times. At break times, staff members sat with children at the table, fostering mealtimes as positive social experiences.

All children demonstrated independent use of the bathroom facilities located adjacent to the preschool room. The provision of tissues and wipes contributed to hygiene, with waste disposed of safely in foot pedal-operated, lidded bins.

Protective clothing was available for children during messy play and outdoor activities, particularly in wet weather conditions. Outdoor play was incorporated daily into the programme at the service.

A designated relaxation area was located in the library corner to accommodate children who required rest or wished to retreat from active play. This space was equipped with soft cushions and floor mats to enhance comfort within the reading area.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The indoor space was thoughtfully arranged to meet the needs of all children in the service. Low tables and chairs were set up for activities and mealtimes. A large art trolley was stocked with plenty of paper and various art and craft supplies. For messy play, there were trays filled with lots of sensorial materials. Imaginative play was encouraged in the home corner, which included a play kitchen, dolls, prams and buggies which were all easily accessible to the children. The library area featured a low-level book stand and soft furnishings, offering a quiet place for children to relax and read. Educational posters at children's eye level decorated the walls. Outdoors, children could enjoy a new play area, including a sheltered section that allowed for outdoor activities in any weather. Ball games, running, and play with ride on toys was facilitated in the school playground to help develop the children's gross motor skills.

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 entrance door to the school was safely secured to ensure that no unauthorised access to or exit from the pre-school was possible. All outdoor play spaces were safely secured to prevent a preschool child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or any other source of danger and also to prevent unauthorised access to the external play areas.

All toys and play equipment were safe for the age group using them, were in good condition, were free from pinch and crush points, exposed bolts or sharp edges.

Safe storage out of children's reach was available for all detergents and cleaning agents used in the service.

Infection Control:

A high standard of operational hygiene was noted in all rooms of the service.

The playrooms and sanitary areas were adequately ventilated with openable windows in the area.

There was hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels at each wash hand basin to facilitate hygienic hand washing for children and adults. Foot pedal operated lidded bins were available to ensure the hygienic disposal of all waste.

Fire Safety:

Fire doors leading from the preschool were unobstructed and clear at time of inspection.

A safe fire assembly point was identified in the outdoor area.

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) All staff working at the service had completed first aid responder training in 2024. The certificates were in date up to 2026.

(2)(a) A well-equipped first aid box was stored in an easily accessible location within the preschool room.

(b) The first aid box was available to children attending at all times.

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 record of monthly fire drills carried out at the service were available to view on the day of inspection. The most recent fire drill was carried out on the 14th of October 2025.

(b) All fire extinguishers were wall mounted and were last serviced in November 2024. There were written records maintained of the number, type and service history of smoke alarms in the service. The most recent service took place on the 18th of June 2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.

(b) The premises appeared safe and secured. The front gate to the school was securely closed. The outdoor area was well secured preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from this area of the service.

(c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.

(d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.

(e) There were an adequate number of toilets and wash hand basins available at the service. Plans to provide a nappy changing facility were in progress.