

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK157
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Name of Service:	Northside FRC Sunshine Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Northside Family Resource Centre, Ballynanty, Limerick, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 APX8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Kane
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	18/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	63	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 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
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Description of service

Sunshine Creche is a community based, full day care service in operation since September 2006. It provides a service to children from 0 to 6 years. The facility operates from 8:00am to 6:00pm, Monday to Friday.

The facility can accommodate up to 110 preschool children at any one time. A service for school aged children is provided each afternoon. The facility features five well-equipped indoor playrooms and a dedicated outdoor preschool facility. For convenience, each room is situated near its own sleeping, sanitary, and nappy-changing facilities. Every group enjoys their own assigned outdoor space, which includes sheltered sections to ensure children can play outside in any weather.

Staffing

The registered provider is the CEO of Northside Family Resource Centre, to whom the Head of Early Years Services reports. There are 27 adults employed to work in the service which includes a designated manager. All adults working directly with the children have the required childcare qualifications.

The staff engage in ongoing professional development with many having completed training in Infection control, Risk assessments, Health and safety, Fire safety, Manual handling, and Child protection. There are 4 staff who have completed the LINC training, a programme designed to enhance the inclusion of all children in Early Learning and Care 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

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- 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*
- (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) A designated person in charge of operating the service was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There is a clear management structure that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each member of the management team.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for all staff members employed to work at the service.

(b) References were submitted by staff from either their past employers or from other reputable sources such as previous schools and colleges attended.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff.

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 8 staff members who had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

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(3) All vetting procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or an equivalent such qualification.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider at all times ensured that the correct number of suitable and qualified staff were available in all areas of the service.

(2) The following were the adult child ratio in the service at the time of the unannounced inspection.

Baby room there was 6 preschool children and 2 staff,

Toddler room there were 9 preschool children and 3 staff,

Playgroup room 1 there were 7 children and 3 staff,

Playgroup Room 2 there were 15 children and 3 staff,

Pre-school Room 1 there were 8 children and 4 staff.

Preschool Room 3 there were 18 children and 4 staff.

The adult/child ratio in all areas was correct and there were sufficient relief staff to assist at busy periods and to cover staff break times throughout the day. There were 3 students present on work experience on the day of the inspection.

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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:

The service actively promoted healthy eating through fresh, nutritious hot meals and snacks served at regular intervals. During the inspection, children enjoyed chicken vol au vents for their main dinner, with second helpings readily available. A second hot meal was provided in the early afternoon, and staff held snack supplies in each room to meet children's needs if hungry between scheduled mealtimes. Water was accessible to all children throughout the day with jugs and cups accessible in every room.

Sanitary facilities were conveniently located adjacent to each room. The baby and toddler areas had easily accessible dedicated nappy-changing stations with clearly displayed policies. Toiletries were safely stored, labelled, and easily accessible to staff. To maintain hygiene, rooms were equipped with tissues, wipes, and pedal-operated lidded bins for secure waste disposal.

Organised storage and labelled coat hooks in each room encouraged child independence. Dedicated sleep rooms next to the baby and toddler areas contained standard cots, while children over two years used low-level beds with individual bedding. Staff conducted and documented frequent sleep checks. Additionally, each room featured a rest area with soft seating and blankets, where staff facilitated quiet periods for relaxation.

Children benefitted from a flexible indoor-outdoor routine, with age-appropriate play areas accessible whenever weather permitted. Sheltered outdoor spaces allowed for play during rain or heat. On the day of inspection, children were appropriately dressed for the weather in waterproof suits, wellies, and fleeces, ensuring comfort during extended periods of outdoor transition.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Each room is thoughtfully designed to foster social, emotional, cognitive, and physical development. The **Baby Room** offers a calm atmosphere with ample soft floor space and comfortable adult seating for feeding and comfort. Lots of soft floor matting encouraged floor play. In the **Toddler Room**, the layout introduced more physical challenges, such as low-level climbing frames for gross motor skills and appropriately sized furniture for

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tabletop activities. The **Playgroup and Preschool Rooms** were highly adaptable, with layouts and equipment frequently rotated to reflect the children's evolving interests and abilities.

Photographic displays throughout the service documented the children's activities and milestones. Every room featured a dedicated reading area with a diverse book selection. To keep the environment stimulating, staff regularly redesigned internal and external spaces based on the children's current preferences and developmental needs.

In addition to the active play areas, the facility included a dedicated sensory room designed as a tranquil retreat. This space allowed children to enjoy quiet time in a soothing environment featuring dimmed lighting and calming music. To support sensory regulation and comfort, the room was furnished with a cocoon-like egg chair and various textured materials, offering a safe place for children to relax and reset.

The outdoor preschool operates year-round, regardless of weather. Children were equipped with appropriate gear to explore the seasonal changes of the natural environment safely. The larger outdoor space included sheltered areas for storage and tabletop work, as well as dedicated sanitary facilities with hot water to ensure consistent hand hygiene. Separate outdoor spaces were available for the younger children located directly next to their playrooms. These areas featured low-level climbing equipment and age-appropriate ride-on toys, all set on impact-absorbent rubber matting to ensure children could play safely outdoors

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 internal and external doors to the premises were secured at all times. Staff working at reception allowed access to all who entered the facility. A log of visitors arriving and leaving the premises was maintained.

Regular risk assessments of all areas internally and externally were carried out to ensure hazards were identified and measures taken to ensure the children's safety at all times. A health and safety committee meet on a weekly basis to discuss the outcome of all risk assessments.

All toys and play equipment were assessed and were noted to be in good condition and free from pinch and crush points. All hazardous cleaning agents were stored out of reach of all children.

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Infection Control:

The service was cleaned on a regular basis with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the building.

There were hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels and foot pedal operated lidded bins available at all children and adult toilets and sinks. The children were observed to wash their hands in all rooms prior to mealtimes, after messy play and after using the toilet. The children were assisted with hand washing by the staff when required.

When nappy changing all change mats were disinfected before and after each use and all nappies were safely disposed of.

Fire Safety:

All fire escape doors were clear and accessible. Clearly identified fire assembly points were signposted in the outdoor play areas.

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) The management at the service ensured that a person with first aid responder training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. There were 11 staff employed who had up to date FAR training.

(2)(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions throughout the facility.

(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were positioned in the main office and close to all rooms of the service if required.

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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) Records were available to show that fire drills were carried out monthly. The most recent fire drill took place on the 25th of February 2026.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available on the premises with the most recent services having been completed in September and December 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed in conspicuous positions on the premises.

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 premises appeared to be of sound and stable structure. No identification of any building defects were observed or highlighted by the designated person in charge or any staff member.
- (b) The entrance to the service was secured and all visitor access was managed appropriately. The outdoor areas were safe and secured with high walls and fences preventing any unauthorised access to or exit from the areas.
- (c) Protective covers were provided on light fittings where required.

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(d) The premises throughout appeared clean with a high standard of operational hygiene noted in all areas of the premises.

(e) Adequate and suitable sanitary accommodation were noted both internally and externally in the service. The outdoor preschool had access to their own bathroom facilities outside.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) Some walls in the preschool rooms, including the steps to the nappy changing unit in the Playgroup room 2, have worn paint and require repainting. Maintaining high-quality, washable paintwork throughout all rooms and sanitary facilities is essential for effective cleaning and to ensure maximum protection against the spread of infection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

On April 7th, 2026, the Sunshine Childcare Service Manager inspected the affected areas. Maintenance followed on April 13th, including cleaning, sanding, and repainting the walls and nappy-changing steps with washable, scrubbable paint.

To maintain compliance, the service updated its maintenance schedule to include quarterly inspections of all paintwork in all rooms and sanitary accommodations. Any identified wear will be logged and repaired within four weeks, or sooner if urgent. Moving forward, all maintenance will exclusively use high-durability, hygiene-compliant washable paint

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of all completed works were forwarded to the Office of the Early Years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.