

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS020
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Name of Service:	Tir na nÓg Playschool
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Address of Service:	Old Boys School, Clonaslee, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 WR96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ann Rigney
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
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

Tir na Nóg preschool is a community run preschool located in the village of Clonaslee in Co. Laois. Tir na Nóg offers sessional care and education to children between the age of 2- 6 years from 09:30am – 12.30pm Monday to Friday. The preschool consists of two large preschool rooms, a kitchen and an office. A large outdoor play area is located to the back of the preschool. Car parking and set down facilities were available in the car park at the front of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs five staff in the service. There were five staff present on the day of the inspection including the person in charge and four childcare staff. The registered provider does not work in the service. The person in charge facilitated the inspection on 22 January.

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 the child 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)(c), (7)- Management and recruitment,
- Regulation 10 - Policy's Procedures etc of Preschool Service,

- Regulation 11(1), (3) – Staffing Levels,
- Regulation 19 (1)(a), (3) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered following receipt of information received to the inspectorate.

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-

- (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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The designated person in charge and deputy were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

The staff members were aware of the management structure, the lines of authority and their roles within the service. The names of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge were displayed on a notice board in the entrance hall.

Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that no new staff members were employed to work in the service since the previous inspection held on 13 March 2025.

(2) (c)

Garda vetting was available for all staff members employed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(7) (a)

Records were held in the service to confirm that staff had received and read the policies, procedures and statements of the service.

The person in charge advised that informal staff meetings occur each morning at 09:15am.

Non-Compliance Information

(7) (a)

The person in charge advised the inspector that staff receive supervision, however no written evidence to indicate that individual staff supervision meetings were completed between the person in charge and staff members were maintained. This does not align to the Supervision of Staff policy which states that “A supervision program will be agreed between each individual staff and management. Support and Supervision form will be completed”.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge has purchased a one-to-one meeting record book to record all support and supervision meetings with staff. The Manager will schedule a support and supervision meeting with each staff member each term.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photography of supervision record book received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 – Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were reviewed and were found to be in keeping with Regulation 10.

- Behaviour Management
- Staff absences
- Supervision of staff
- Child Supervision
- Complaints

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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection.
- (3)
The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection. There were 23 children being cared for by 5 adults. There were 15 children being cared for by 2 adults in the Caterpillar room. There were 8 children in the Butterfly room being cared for by 2 adults. The person in charge was available to assist in both rooms as required.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) Basic needs

Children in the Butterfly room and Caterpillar room sat at low level tables and chairs during mealtimes. Snacks were provided by parents. Morning snack on the day of inspection consisted of fruit, yoghurt, sandwiches, crackers, cheese and raisins. Staff sat with the children during snack time engaging in conversation and assisting with opening snacks. Children's drink bottles were freely accessible to children in the preschool rooms. The children were supervised by the staff when eating who encouraged the children to chat and eat at their own pace without being rushed.

The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the session as they chose between activities. Staff in the Caterpillar room were observed to sit with the children during free play activities and offer assistance when required for example, cutting up paper plates for an art and craft activity where the children were making octopuses.

Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary.

Staff supported children to get their coats, wet gear and wellies on before going outside to play.

Supporting relationships

The staff advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the children's day is communicated via an electronic messaging application. Daily handover occurs at drop off and collection times. Journals were maintained for each child to take home at the end of the preschool year to illustrate activities the children engaged in. Children's birthdays and a family wall with photographs of the children with their family members were displayed in each room. A community wall had pictures of places of interest in the local community such as the local shop and school. Children's artwork was on display in the preschool rooms and hallway, including an 'All

About Me' section displaying the children names and interests. These personalised displays assist the children to feel connected to home and their community.

Physical and material environment

Containers on accessible shelves in each preschool room offered a variety of equipment to choose from such as magnetic building tiles, magna sticks for creating, stickle bricks, musical instruments and toy animals.

Areas of interest in the Caterpillar room consisted of a water trough and a sand tray, each stocked with cups, jugs and toys to enjoy messy play. Children could move freely from each activity throughout the session. A play kitchen area was sectioned off in the corner of the preschool room by a partition, with a child sized cutout door and windows. Children were observed to enjoy imaginative play within this area using the kitchen equipment and toy washing machine. A table labelled 'Mark Making Area' was accessible to children to use as they wished and had containers of arts and crafts materials such as colours, scissors, glue sticks and paper plates.

Before snack time, children in the Caterpillar room were observed to participate in 'circle time' activity where the children sat on a floor cushion in a circle with staff and participated in a game of 'hide the object'. A variety of items were placed on the floor; staff placed a blanket on the items and removed one item with the blanket. The children had to guess which item was missing. When children successfully guessed the missing item, the staff encouraged a discussion regarding describing the item such as the colour. This supported children's cognitive development. Imaginative play was promoted with the availability of dolls, dress up costumes, toy cars and playing with dinosaurs in a tuff tray.

A range of books were also available in the reading area in both preschool rooms.

Children's coats and bags were hung in the hallway on hooks with each child's photograph displayed above their hook.

A range of developmentally appropriate equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. Opportunities were provided for challenge and safe risk for example, a low wooden climbing frame and large tyres forming a playful tunnel for climbing over and under. A concrete surfaced area allowed space for the use of trikes and tractors, while the large grass area provided space for running and jumping. A wooden playhouse with steps and a slide was available to the children. Numerous painted picnic benches were positioned throughout the garden if a child wished to sit and rest. A mud kitchen equipped with pots and pans, a swing set and sand table were also in the

garden, providing variety of play experiences to suit all children. Staff were positioned throughout the garden assisting children where required.

(3)

On the day of inspection there were no practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful observed in the service. Staff members ensured children were supported and demonstrated warmth and affection towards the children. Staff members were observed to be kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names and appropriate eye contact was made during interactions.

Staff demonstrated a knowledge of the service behaviour management policy and the structures in place for reporting inappropriate care practices.

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 preschool was securely locked and controlled by staff to prevent children exiting the pre-school unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of the children in the kitchen in a cupboard and up on high shelves in the sanitary accommodation. The door to the kitchen was observed closed throughout the inspection when not in use by staff.

Gates and fencing secured the perimeter of the premises to prevent children accessing the front of the premises when playing outdoors.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from wall mounted dispensers at child level. Regular hand washing was observed throughout the morning as children washed their hands before their snack, after toileting and as needed. Pedal bins were available in the preschool rooms and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the

sanitary accommodation as well as openable windows. The preschool rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows. Perishable foods brought in from home were stored in the fridge. A cleaning schedule was in place in the preschool rooms, sanitary accommodation, hall and office. The service was clean and well-maintained on the day of inspection.

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

In the preschool rooms, children were supervised primarily by sight during the course of the inspection. Room layouts allowed for effective supervision. Children who required assistance in the sanitary accommodation were supported by staff as required.

During outdoor play, five staff were positioned throughout the outdoor area to allow for effective supervision of children. Children could freely access the sanitary accommodation from an external door in the sanitary accommodation which lead directly to the outdoor play area.

Staff were observed to provide the handover of each child to a parent or guardian at collection time.

Non-Compliance Information

The children were not adequately supervised during the transition to return indoors following outdoor play. Staff did not have an effective system in place to ensure all 23 children playing outdoors were counted before transitioning inside. As the children were removing their coats and wellington boots at 12:20, a child who had been left in the outdoor play area was observed knocking on a locked door to gain entry. A staff member opened the door and the child was returned to their peer group. This presented a risk that a child might experience emotional distress or experience harm due to lack of supervision. It is acknowledged that the child was not distressed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff were informed to conduct head counts during transitions to and from the outdoor area. The services Supervision of Children policy has been updated. All staff were made aware of the changes and procedures to be

carried out during transitions. This was discussed at a staff meeting where our supervision of children policy was discussed.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated Supervision of Children policy received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been addressed.