

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LS020
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Tir na nÓg Playschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Old Boys School, Clonaslee, Co. Laois
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R32 WR96
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Rigney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	13/03/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	A Spain
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable.
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### Description of service

Tir na Nóg is a community run preschool service located on the outskirts of Clonaslee village in north Co. Laois. The service cares for children in the age range 2 to 6 years between the hours of 9.30am and 12.30pm during school terms. The service has the sole use of all the rooms in the former school building. Children have access to two playrooms and sanitary accommodation directly off the hallway outside of the rooms. There is also an entrance hallway, an office, a combined staff room and kitchen, sanitary accommodation for staff, a storeroom for toys and a cleaning storeroom in the service. An enclosed outdoor play area is available at the back of the service.

### Staffing

The service is staffed by six adults which includes the person in charge of the service. The registered provider does not work directly in the service.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

Regulation 9(1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3),(4) – Management and Recruitment,  
Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service,

Regulation 11(1)(3) – Staffing Levels,  
Regulation 19(1)(a)(b) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child,  
Regulation 20(1)(a) – Facilities for rest and play,  
Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials,  
Regulation 25(1)(2)(a)(b) – First Aid,  
Regulation 26(1)(a)(b)(4) – Fire Safety Measures,  
Regulation 28 – Insurance,  
Regulation 29(a)(b)(c)(d)(e) – Premises.

The scope of the inspection included all rooms in use in the service and the outdoor area which was also in use on the day of inspection.

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 wish 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)

The service had both a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise as required were present on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Records were available with each staff member's rostered hours to work in the service. Pictures of the staff, a staff profile which included childcare qualifications, roles, interests and hobbies and the rooms the staff worked in were posted outside both playrooms in the service. Staff were observed to be aware of their roles and responsibilities in caring for the needs of the children on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Two references from past employers were held on file in respect of four staff working in the service. A reference from a past employer and a reference from a reputable source was held on file in respect of one staff member. Two references from reputable sources were held on file in respect of the remaining staff member.

(c)

A Garda vetting disclosure was held on file in respect of the six staff members 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)

International police vetting was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(3)

Records available confirmed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were conducted prior to the appointment of staff to work in the service.

(4)

Certification was available to confirm that all staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education varying from level 5 to level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 person in charge had email confirmation to advise that all the service policies and procedures were sent electronically to staff and parents in August annually before the new school term began. Records were available to advise that staff had agreed to read and follow the service policies and procedures. A staff member in the service confirmed receipt of the service policies and procedures. The accident and incident policy for the service was reviewed by the inspector. The corresponding accident and incident book held by the service confirmed that the practice of recording accidents and incidents was in keeping with the service policy as outlined.

### 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)  
Three staff members cared for 14 children in the Caterpillar playroom in the service. Two staff members cared for 10 children in the Butterfly playroom in the service.

(3)  
The inspector reviewed the childrens attendance records held on file for the day of inspection. All children present in the service were recorded as in attendance with five staff members also rostered as present. The inspector also reviewed the childrens attendance records and the staff roster for weeks beginning 10 February 2025 and 24 February 2025. Records confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance in the

Caterpillar playroom was 15 children with 3 staff members present. Records confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance in the Butterfly playroom was 11 children with 2 staff members present.

### 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*

*(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

##### Basic Needs

- Staff in the Butterfly playroom were observed to supervise children for hand washing before circle time and lunch break. Children were encouraged to independently take their lunch bags to the tables where they sat with their peers and staff to enjoy lunch in a relaxed atmosphere.
- Staff were observed to encourage children to place waste paper in the bin in the playroom after having fresh fruit, sandwiches, crackers, yoghurts and beakers of water from which to take drinks as provided from home. Staff were also observed to sit with the children in the Caterpillar playroom for lunch which comprised of apple, cucumber, sandwiches, rice cakes, and rolls with water to drink.
- Rest areas were available in both playrooms for children to relax and take a break from the daily activities in the rooms.
- Staff were observed to support children to be sociable and respectful towards each other and both spoke to the children and listened to them in a calm and sensitive manner.

### Supporting Relationships around Children:

- A key worker system was in operation in both playrooms in the service to ensure the children were both familiar with and relaxed in the presence of the staff caring for them daily.
- A balanced mixture of adult and child directed play was facilitated in the prepared at work and play environments that were available to the children. Artwork on display in the playrooms which included shamrocks and coloured pictures of leprechauns was evident of the forthcoming St.Patrick's festive day celebrations in the service. Staff engaged the children in conversations on St.Patrick's day parades and the children had made costumes to wear on the festive day.
- Staff held informal meetings each morning to prepare for the arrival of children for the day's activities. An electronic application was also in use by the staff to communicate ideas and plans for activities in the service. Evidence was also available in the service of staff meetings to support staff in their practice. For example, a record of the staff meeting conducted on the 14 January 2025 advised that staff training needs, preparation for upcoming festive days, building upkeep and staff cover were included in the topics for discussion.
- The person in charge furnished records of an open day held in April 2024 and a "Christmas Experience" morning held in December 2025 to foster ongoing communication with parents and guardians of children in daily attendance in the service.
- The "family wall" with pictures of families, the "birthday wall" with pictures of children and their birthdays and the "community Wall" with pictures of buildings in the community were indicative of the efforts made by the service to foster a link between the service and the local community.
- The childrens learning journals showed photographs and descriptive images of the activities the children engaged in between September and June annually for take home at year end.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a good variety of age and stage appropriate toys and play equipment for the children both indoors and outdoors in the service. A variety of the childrens art and craft work were displayed around the playrooms and hallways in the service which included numbers, shapes and animals. Toys and play equipment to support learning and development in the playrooms included bricks, blocks, straws, tools and toys on wheels in construction areas. Home corners were provided with cookers, utensils, toy washing machines, dressing tables and dress up clothing. Sand and water trays were available for messy play. A variety of jigsaws, puzzles, games, card games, insets, sorting and connection toys were available for tabletop activities. Arts and crafts materials included crayons, paints, shapes, scissors and stickers.

The large outdoor play area was well developed to provide different areas of interest and children were observed to enjoy outdoor play after break time in the service. Doors leading to the outdoors play area were available at both ends of the hallway and close to the playrooms in the service. Most of the area was set under grass cover. Children were observed to be supervised by the staff as they played in small groups with pans and saucepans in the mud kitchen, the stones in a timber box, on swings and a climbing frame and with footballs. Timber planting boxes were provided to seed spring flowers and vegetables. Chairs were anchored to large timber frames in an imaginative driving area. Coloured tyres of different sizes and dimensions were safely anchored into the ground for children to climb through and for physical manoeuvring. A smooth concrete area was used by the children to play on bikes, trikes and to push wheelbarrows.

Picnic benches were provided for children to both play and picnic outdoors. A large shelter with colourful wall mural paintings of trees, mushrooms, bees and caterpillars offered a sheltered area for children to play outdoors.

Outdoor boots were held in storage in the shelter to facilitate play outdoors in poor weather conditions. A storage shed was provided outdoors to allow outdoor play equipment to be put away and stored after use.

(b)

The rest areas in the playrooms were finished with a soft carpet and had couched and cushions for children to relax and rest as required. Soft toys and books left on low level open book stands in the rest areas offered a relaxed environment for children to retreat to during their day in the service. A bench in the outdoor shelter offered children an area outside to rest and relax during physical outdoor play.

## 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.*

#### Compliance Information

Both playrooms were spacious, bright, clean and uncluttered. Low level tables and chairs were available for children to sit and play. Toys and play equipment was observed to be in a good state of repair and well maintained. Low level shelving and storage boxes ensured children could see and access toys and play equipment of their choice.

### 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 six staff members had up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training with an expiry date of the 26 September 2026.
- (2)(a)(b)  
The first aid box was safely stored in the storeroom at the entrance to the service and close to both playrooms in 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 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)  
The service maintained a record of fire drills as conducted in the service.

(b)  
 The maintenance record for firefighting equipment located in both playrooms, the kitchen and near both the front and back door entrances in the hallway confirmed that an annual service was conducted 31 October 2024. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that the last service was conducted 25 February 2025.

(4)  
 A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was positioned on the wall in the playrooms. A fire assembly point was posted on the wall in the carpark at the front of the building.

## Part VI – Safety

### Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 44 children in daily attendance in a sessional service. Insurance was valid from the 28 March 2024 to the 27 March 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 community owned building was surrounded by a smooth pathway. There was no evidence of dampness or mould growth in the rooms in the service. Windows and doors appeared to be both water and weather tight.
- (b) Entrance to the service was secured and a door bell was provided for access to the service and to facilitate late drop off and early collection of children from the rooms in the service. Cleaning agents and equipment were stored in a secure cleaning storeroom inaccessible to children. The outdoor area was safely secured with a heavy duty wire fence and a secured cast iron gate to prevent unsupervised exit by children when playing outdoors. Refuse bins were stored in an area at the side of the building and wire fencing was provided to ensure the area was inaccessible to children. The service was connected to the public water supply. The septic tank drainage system was fenced off from the outdoor play area and was inaccessible to children in attendance in the service.
- (c) Openable windows in all rooms ensured a good mix of both natural and artificial lighting and ventilation in all rooms in the service. Oil fuelled radiators ensured comfortable room temperatures.
- (d) The rooms and hallway in the service were brightly painted. The timber floors in the playrooms and tiled bathroom floors were in a good state of repair and clean on the day of inspection. Wall hooks for bags and coats in the hallway ensured storage of children's personal belongings off the floor to facilitate cleaning after sessional hours in the service. The sink in the kitchen was plumbed with hot and cold water to facilitate cleaning in the service.
- (e) Four toilets and four wash hand basins provided adequate sanitary accommodation for up to 40 children registered to attend the service. A separate staff toilet and wash hand basin was provided off the hallway for use by up to six staff working in the service. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were provided in the sanitary accommodation. Lidded bins were provided for disposal of used paper towels.