

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS055
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Name of Service:	Giggles Creche
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Address of Service:	95 Loughgate, Portarlinton, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 PK12
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead Boland, Valerie Keating
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	18/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	20
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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 R35 K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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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).

Description of service

Giggles Crèche is registered to provide full day, part time and sessional early learning and care to children aged between 0-6. Children currently in attendance range from age 2-6 years. Giggles Creche is one of two services operated by the registered providers. The premises is a detached purpose-built building located in a residential area in the town of Portarlinton, Co. Laois. The service operates from 08:00-17:30 Monday to Friday. The service is comprised of three preschool rooms, the Pre-ECCE room, ECCE room 1 and ECCE room 2, a sleep room, a kitchen and an office. A large outdoor play area was located to the side and back of the service.

Staffing

The service is operated by two registered providers who both work in the service with the children. They employ eight staff members to work in the service. There were seven adults present on the day of inspection, this included one registered provider, a person in charge and five childcare practitioners. One of the two registered providers arrived at the service shortly after the inspection commenced and remained at the service for the duration of the inspection.

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

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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;

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels,

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, welfare and development of child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety and welfare of child,

Regulation 24 (1),(3)(b)– Checking in and out and record of attendance,

Regulation 25 (1),(2)(a)(b) First aid,

Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b),(4) Fire safety measures.

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 registered provider, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN 1661	18/05/2026	Water temperatures in the sanitary accommodation were too hot ranging between 55.4°C – 59.5°C.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately onsite after issuance of the notice. The registered provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the inspectorate.	

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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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The registered provider and the person in charge were on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

Files for eight staff members and both registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(a)

Eighteen written validated references were available from a previous employer and

(b)

two written validated reference were available from a reputable source.

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- (c)
In regard to the eight staff and the registered providers the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (4)
Eight employed childcare staff members and the registered providers, working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. In the morning on arrival at the service, there were twenty nine children being supervised directly by six adults. In the afternoon, there were twenty children being supervised by seven adults.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection demonstrated by the following observation;

Morning

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- There was one adult providing direct care to five children aged between 2-3 years in the pre-ECEC room.
- There were three adults providing direct care to fourteen children aged between 2 years and 10 months – 5 years ECEC 2 room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to ten children aged between 3-5 years in the ECEC 1 room.

Afternoon

- There was one adult providing direct care to three children aged between 2-3 years in the pre-ECEC room.
- There were three adults providing direct care to ten children aged between 2 years and 10 months – 5 years ECEC 2 room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to seven children aged between 3-5 years in the ECEC 1 room.

The registered provider was also available to support in all rooms when required.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises duration the operational hours of the service. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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

Children brought in a morning snack from home. A hot dinner was provided by the service. Children were observed sitting together at low level tables. Morning snack consisted of a variety of sandwiches, yoghurts, fresh fruit and crackers. Staff sat with the children during snack times and engaged in conversation. Children's drinks were readily available in their lunch bags which were accessible to the children throughout the morning. Children were not rushed while eating. The hot meal on the day of inspection was pasta, meatballs in tomato sauce and grated cheese. The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently. Large serving bowls were brought into each preschool room, and children were observed to take their individual bowls and serve themselves. Younger children were assisted by staff when required. Children served themselves extra portions if they wished.

Regular hand washing was observed throughout the morning as children washed their hands before their snack,

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after toileting and after outdoor play. Self-toileting was supported for children in the ECEC rooms and children were supervised as necessary. Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis for children from the pre ECCE room and more frequently if required.

Children in the pre ECCE room were observed to enjoy moving freely in the room selecting toys and equipment such as magnetic tiles to build with. The staff were observed to sit on the floor with the younger children, engaging in their activities and singing songs.

Supporting relationships

Staff working with the children were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. 'Our Family' photo walls were displayed in the preschool rooms, helping the children feel connected to home. An 'Our Community' wall was on display in the ECCE 2 room with photographs of the local area such as the Odlums factory, Corrig woods and Emo house. Children took turns taking on roles from the 'Our Classroom Jobs' chart. Each child's photo was laminated and alternated between individual roles such as line leader, waitress and an electrician.

My Learning journals were maintained for each child. Children's photographs were displayed on the cover and artwork, observations and photographs of children on outings were contained within these journals.

Communication with parents regarding the children's day to day learning, care and activities were provided at drop off and collection times.

Physical and material environment

The preschool rooms were laid out to facilitate free movement with various interest areas throughout. A dress up rail, kitchen area with play equipment and a tool bench provided opportunity for role play. A rest area was in each preschool room with child size vinyl couches for reading and resting throughout the day. Musical instruments, building blocks, jigsaws and toy vehicles were positioned on low accessible shelves.

Sensory equipment was provided such as a peanut ball, a Bouncy board and swivel boards, which assisted children to regulate when required.

Children were provided with outdoor play at various intervals throughout the day. Children had the opportunity to play at the sand table with pots, sieves, muffin trays and shovels. Slides, tunnels, a wobbly bridge, a basketball hoop and a climbing dome provided opportunity for gross motor and energetic play.

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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 service was secure and managed by the staff within. A doorbell alerted staff to any visitors. A lock was positioned up high out of reach of children.

Cleaning products were stored safely on high shelves in the sanitary accommodation and kitchen out of reach of children.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from wall mounted dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available in each preschool room and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation as well as an openable window. The preschool rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Refrigerators were provided in the preschool rooms for the storage of children's lunches and perishable foods brought in from home.

Cot mattresses were in good condition and had removable covers for washing.

Outdoor sand trays had lids and were covered at the end of the session, preventing any potential contamination.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not required to be administered to any child on the day of inspection. The registered provider informed the inspector that no child in the service was on specific medication requiring a care plan. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in a medicine cabinet in the office out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals by a staff member in the designated sleep room. A record of the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children was noted in a sleep log. Clean sheets and cellular blankets were kept on a shelving unit in the sleep room.

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Fire Safety:

The designated fire exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection. A fire assembly point was to the front of the premises.

Outing:

A policy was in place to support outings conducted by the service. During discussion with staff, they advised that the children participate in walks and picnics in the local area. A risk assessment, check list and parental consent forms were completed prior to outings. .

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

See statutory notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN1661 served.

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-

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1)

The registered providers ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed following review of the attendance record books.

(3)(b)

The person in charge ensured a record in writing was maintained of any person entering the service. The sign in book was signed by the inspector.

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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)

Three staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR). A staff member qualified in FAR was available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the office of the service and was accessible to adults caring for children attending the pre-school 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)

A written record was available of monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was recorded on 29 April 2026.

(b)

Records were kept of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment which was last serviced on 19 August 2025. The smoke alarm system in the premises was last serviced on 29 April 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.