

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LS058
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Rias Kids Academy
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Cullenbeg Community Centre, Ballycullenbeg, Mountmellick, Co. Laois
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<b>Eircode:</b>	R32 R2WF
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Maria Manley Fogarty
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	09/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	14	PM	Not applicable.
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R Flynn
<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

Rias Kids Academy is a private sessional service for children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:30 and 12:30 on a Monday to Friday basis, participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. The Early Years' Service is located in an urban area in the town of Mountmellick, County Laois and operates from a single-storey building. One pre-school room, a breakout room, an entrance hall and a kitchen are provided. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available to the front of the property.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs four adults in the service. The registered provider and three adults were working directly with children on 9 June 2025. The registered provider facilitated 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety and premises. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

Regulations 9(1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4) Management and Recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1) (3) Staffing Levels,

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

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 Premises.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under -  
Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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, 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.

(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 and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Five staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the four staff members.

Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)  
A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the registered provider and four staff members. The service 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 no adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)  
The registered provider and four staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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 children.

(3)  
The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection.  
There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults and the registered provider.

### 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)

There was a happy atmosphere in the service. The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the morning session as they chose between activities. Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during all interactions.

Children's artwork was displayed.

The pre-school room had a range of play-based equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity and spontaneous play.

Children were observed eating a packed lunch provided by their parents. Flexibility was provided with the service promoting a rolling snack time. Lunches consisted of a variety of sandwiches, yoghurts, rice cakes and fruit. Children were observed to eat when they felt hungry. Staff sat with the children during snack times and engaged in conversation. Toast was offered if children did not want their snack or wanted extra food. The staff encouraged and supported the children to feed themselves independently, children were observed to butter their own toast and were not rushed as they enjoyed the independence.

Children's drinks were readily available in their lunch bags. Lunch bags were stored in their bags hung on low level hooks in the entrance hall. The children sat at low level picnic benches while eating and engaged in conversations with each other.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. A range of books were available in the reading area of the preschool room.

Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting.

Cognitive development by imaginative play and role play was promoted. Children were observed to play ‘families’ with children taking on varying roles. Other areas which promoted role play were a hair dressing area and supermarket check out area. Children had the opportunity to take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities and in accessing play equipment throughout the session. One child requested to build with large blocks, a staff member sat on the floor and they both built a big tower, knocked it down and built it again.

The materials available support and reflect the identity of children who are attending the service, their families and also the wider community, for example, in the dress up area, school uniforms from the three local schools were available for dress up to help prepare the children for moving onto primary school. Signs at interest areas were written in different languages to support diversity in the pre-school. A family wall in the pre school room displayed photographs of children and their families.

The staff advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the service are given to parents at drop off and collection times, and via an electronic messaging application.

### 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

The pre-school had a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available for the children to use and play with. Low level open shelving units displaying the pre-school materials and equipment and ensured the resources were easily accessible to the children at all times.

Defined areas of interest were observed and included a home/kitchen corner with cooking equipment, a cosy reading corner, a large wall mounted black board and a construction area.

A variety of multi-sensory experiences were provided including sand and water tables, a tuff tray and playdough with a variety of tools which supported the children to engage in meaningful play experiences and engage in open-ended discovery. Aprons were hung up on the wall next to the tuff tray for messy play.

### 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

Light fittings were not in place and exposed bulbs were noted in the entrance hallway and the front play room which posed potential risk of harm if a bulb shattered.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

New lights were purchased and installation is scheduled for July 2025.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

Photograph of the new light fixtures were sent to the inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

Regulatory compliance for Regulation 23 remains outstanding until the new light fixtures are installed. It is acknowledged that the corrective action proposed will rectify the non-compliance identified.

### 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 registered provider and one staff member were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises for the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the main pre-school room.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 15 May 2025.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in a conspicuous location in the premises.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for 22 children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

### 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 visually appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)  
The entrance to the pre-school service was secured by a locked door with access gained through a door bell entry system. The service has sole use of the community centre.
- (c)  
In the pre-school room openable windows provided natural light and ventilation. Natural light was augmented by artificial lighting when required.  
Wall mounted radiators were in place with radiator covers.
- (d)  
The floors and walls were in a good state of repair and maintenance. A cleaning schedule was available for the service and records were in place.
- (e)  
Two sanitary accommodations with low level sinks were available. One sanitary accommodation area is ventilated by means of natural ventilation in the form of an openable window.  
Liquid soap and an electric hand dryer was available.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- (c)  
There was no ventilation provided in one of the sanitary accommodations. The window has been boarded up from the outside due to damage.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

The shutter for the bathroom window is due to be installed in July 2025.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of email from the Building Surveying Manager was sent to the inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

Regulatory compliance remains outstanding for Regulation 29. The corrective action proposed will address the non-compliance identified and will be reviewed on the next inspection.