

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS065
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Name of Service:	The Rainbow Castle Ltd.
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Address of Service:	41 Blossom Court, Esker Hills, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 KW29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Honorata Puslednik
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly
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

The Rainbow Castle Ltd provides full day care and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is operated by an independent provider. The service operates from a single-story purpose built creche facility located in the town of town of Portlaoise, Co Laois. Five pre-school rooms, a school aged room, a kitchen, two sleep rooms, an office and a reception area are provided. Two pre-school rooms and the wobbler room were in operation on the 01 July 2025. An outdoor area is located at the back and side of the premises. The service opens from 08:00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

The registered employer employs ten staff. The service has a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge who were not assigned to care rooms but available to provide support if required. A staff member was working in the kitchen. The registered provider does not work 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 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)(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 20 – Facilities for rest and play,
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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, deputy 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.

(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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises during the inspection.

Ten staff files were reviewed, and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The registered had fifteen written and validated references available from past employers or a source other than a past employer for eight staff members.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of ten staff members and the registered provider. 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 two staff members, who had lived outside of the state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The nine staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

- Two written validated references from a past employer or a source other than a past employer were not available in respect of one staff member.
- One written validated reference from a past employer or a source other than a past employer was not available in respect of one staff member.
- Two written references were not validated in respect of one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Written references were obtained and validated.

The service will ensure new staff members have two validated references.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of outstanding written validated references received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b) has been adequately addressed.

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 at all times during the inspection. There were fourteen children attending the service being supervised by nine adults.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were three adults providing direct care to six children aged between 2.5 - 5 years in the Orange room. There were two adults providing direct care to five children aged between 2 - 3 years in the Play group room. There were two adults providing direct care to three children aged between 1-2 years in the Wobbler room.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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)

Children in the orange room and playgroup sat at low level tables and chairs during mealtimes. Snacks were provided by the service and were served at regular intervals. Morning snacks are served at 9:30am and 11:00am. Dinner was provided by the parents and reheated by the kitchen staff. Dinner was served at 1:00pm. Afternoon snack was served at 3:30pm and consisted of a variety of fruit, yoghurts, rice cakes and brioche. Younger children in the Wobbler room were provided with bibs for dinnertime. Children in the wobbler room ate their snack and dinner in highchairs. Children fed themselves and were assisted by staff when required. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meal. The children were supervised by the staff when eating who encouraged the children to chat and eat at their own pace without being rushed.

Children accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Children requiring nappy changes were changed regularly and when required.

Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions with the children and were engaged with the children throughout the inspection for example when a child in the orange room became upset, they immediately comforted and reassured them. The staff listened to the children and responded to their cues.

Staff communicated with parents via a notebook which went home with the children every day, detailing their day. They also updated parents on their child's day at drop off and collection times.

The care rooms were resourced with a range of toys and equipment suitable for the age ranges of the children which were arranged in defined interest areas such as home corners and transport areas. Children had freedom of choice in the materials they wished to use. Open low levels storage systems were used to display the play equipment allowing the children to easily access the toys. Children sat at low level tables while engaged in an arts activity with oats and paint. A selection of tabletop activities were available in the playrooms including jigsaw puzzles and blocks, sorting and matching activities prompted the development of children’s fine motor skills. Children in the orange group played with tuff trays placed on the floor which had paint materials in one, and rice, pasta and mixing bowls in the other. Age-appropriate books to support language development were provided in each room near rest areas with soft matting and cushions.

The outdoor area provided a change of environment from the care rooms during the day. Ride on toys, climbing equipment with a slide and a climbing frame were available for the children to play on.

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 19 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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and nature tables in the wobbler, orange and playgroup rooms.

(b)

Soft furnishings such as vinyl couches, cushions and cosy corners provided facilities for rest and relaxation in the pre-school rooms.

Two sleep rooms were available. One sleep room was equipped with nine cots. The second sleep room was equipped with eight low level beds for children over two years old to sleep on.

(3)(a)

The large rear outdoor play area was separated into two areas to accommodate the older children. Children from the orange room played on the climbing house with slides, in the large sand pits and on balance beams. Push toys such as trolleys and wheelbarrows were also available. The wobbler room and playgroup children had access to individual outdoor areas directly from their care rooms via patio doors. The play areas for the younger children were equipped with mini slides, colourful chalk, sand pits and a variety of bikes, trikes and scooters. Picnic benches were available for children to sit at. The areas were separated by low wooden fencing and gates. The surface of all outdoor play areas throughout the service were covered in natural grass. High-level wooden fencing secured the perimeter.

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 adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The entrance was managed by staff and the lock to the premises was up high out of reach of children.

Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored safely on high shelves out of reach of children.

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the bathroom.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the kitchen fridge. No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on low level beds. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals throughout the service and written records of these checks were maintained.

Fire Safety:

All fire exits were clear of obstruction and clearly marked.
A notice showing the fire assembly point at the back of the service was on display.
Staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service.

Outing:

An outings policy was in place to guide staff when undertaking an outing with the children. A risk assessment and check list were available along with parental consent forms for future outings.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One child was observed to wear an amber bead necklace. This posed a potential risk of injury to the children if the jewellery was caught or pulled.
2. A window in the orange room was observed to be widely open presenting a potential risk that a child could gain access to the street and road outside. The safety latch was not in place.

Infection Control:

3. Foot operated pedal bins were not in place in the nappy changing room for the hygienic disposal of waste materials which posed a risk of potential cross contamination.
4. There were no paper towel dispensers in place in the service for paper hand towels which posed a risk of potential cross contamination. Children used paper towels from a pile in a basket at each sink.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The amber beads were immediately removed by staff. Staff have been reminded of the dangers of amber beads. The service reminded parents that amber beads are not permitted.

2. Safety latches have been checked on windows and staff have been reminded to keep windows on safety latches.

Infection Control:

3. New foot operated pedal bin has been put in nappy room. Bins will be replaced when needed.
4. Paper towels have been placed in the paper towel dispensers.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.