

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MO028		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Care & Education Academy Limited		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Grattan Park, Balla Road, Claremorris, Co. Mayo		
<b>Eircode:</b>	F12 HR25		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	John McGowan		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/04/2025		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	55	PM 49
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	<p>Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency 2nd Floor, St Mary's HQ  Castlebar  Co Mayo</p>		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	B Lavin and S Meehan		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors		

### 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

### Description of service

This privately operated full day care service is located in the town of Claremorris, county Mayo. A preschool service is provided to children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:45-18:00 hours and offers sessional, part time and full day care to children aged 0-6 years. A school age service is also provided. The premises is a detached, purpose-built single storey building with five care rooms, two sleep rooms and a kitchen and dining room. There is a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There were 17 staff members working in the service on the day of inspection. Fifteen adults were working directly with the preschool children, 1 adult was employed as a cook and the registered provider who assisted with the inspection. There is a designated person in charge and named person available to deputise. The registered provider does not work directly within the service but was present throughout the inspection. Additionally, there are 2 adults over 18 years of age on a childcare work placement, who were supervised when interacting with the children.

### 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.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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

(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 manager was assigned as the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) During the period of inspection, the service manager was the person in charge and was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the service manager, it was confirmed that there were 17 staff members working in the service, which included the registered provider, manager and a kitchen staff member. Two students on work placement were present in the service. These files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(2)(a) Of the 38 references required, 32 references were sourced from past employers and were validated.

(b) The remaining six required references were sourced from reputable sources.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 19 staff. The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police Vetting disclosure was available for two adults working in the service that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to a Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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) There were 15 adults working directly with children on the day of inspection. The students on placement were present in the wobbler room and the sessional room under the supervision of staff members.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:
- Wobbler Room: Two adults cared for 9 children aged 1 - 2 years of age.
  - Full day Montessori room: Three adults cared for 18 children aged between 3 - 4 years of age.
  - Sessional room: One adult cared for 6 children aged between 3 – 5 years of age.
  - Toddler room: Three adults cared for 14 children aged between 2 – 3 years of age.
  - Junior Montessori room: Two adults cared for 8 children aged between 2 – 4 years of age.
- Three additional staff members provided relief cover for breaks and nappy changes.

(8) (a)

The registered provider demonstrated that a minimum of two adults were on the premises during the operation of 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

##### Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were supported during mealtimes with feeding when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at a table and chairs or highchairs which were appropriate for their height and or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- Nappy changing was carried out regularly and promptly when required. This was handled in a positive and sensitive manner. Staff members were observed speaking to children during this time and using it as an opportunity for one-to-one interaction.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during nappy changing and toileting.
- The individual sleep needs of younger children were met. This was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals. Older preschool children were facilitated with a scheduled rest period in the afternoon. For children who did not require sleep, appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children in the wobbler room were observed to be free to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up and learn to walk in a safe space.
- Children in the older care rooms had easy access to the outside area throughout the day and children moved freely between both indoors and outdoors.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions.

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

### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- In the morning before 09.00hrs, the children had the opportunity to have a selection of cereals with milk.
- At 10.45hrs, the children had snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, meat slices, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, vegetable/fruit pieces and yogurt.
- At 14:15hrs, the children had their main meal. On the day of inspection, the main meal was beef stew, mashed potatoes and vegetables.
- At 16:00hrs, the children were had snacks provided by parents and guardians which included raisins, cheese, crackers, rice cakes, sandwiches, wraps, breadsticks, vegetables/fruit pieces and yogurt.
- Cutlery and plates were offered for children’s snack/mealtimes.
- Clean and safe drinking water was available and accessible to children in each playroom.
- There was a designated fridge for the safe storage of perishable foodstuffs from children’s lunch boxes, for their snack times.

## 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) On the day of inspection four staff members on duty was trained in first aider response (FAR) training and were available to children attending the preschool service.

(2) (a) (b).

Fully stocked first aid boxes were available in each of the care rooms and were available to children at all times.

Extra equipment was stored in the office if required.