

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY029
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Name of Service:	Rhode Community Pre-School Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Rhode Community Centre, Rhode, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 H3N3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gillian Kelly
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes
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).

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Description of service

This community sessional service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The age range of the children enrolled in the service is from 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:00 to 12:00 and 12:30 to 15:30 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service consists of pre-school room 1 in the main building with an office. Pre-school room 2 is located in the main community building. This room has to be cleared on a daily basis for use of the local community in the evening.

An outdoor play area is attached to the side of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated on the outskirts of the village of Rhode, County Offaly.

Staffing

Nine adults are employed in the service. The designated person in charge and six staff members were working directly with children on the 17 April 2026. The registered provider was not present 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.

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Regulation 9- Management and recruitment - (1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(c)

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (3)

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

Regulation 20 – Rest and play facilities

Regulation 22- Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and out and record of attendance (1)(3)(a)(b)

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

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 32- Complaints (1)

The inspection was carried out during the morning session that finished at 12:00.

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

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The inspector wishes 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-

- (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*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

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

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Following a review of previous inspection findings, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered providers it was determined that no new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 24 August 2023.

(c)

An in date garda vetting disclosure was available for three adults who required renewal since the last inspection on the 4 October 2024. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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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)

There were thirty-two children attending the morning session supervised directly by seven adults.

Thirteen children were in attendance in pre-school room 1 supervised by two adults.

Nineteen children were in attendance in pre-school room 2 supervised by four adults.

The designated person in charge provided relief cover as required.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. All children enjoyed physical play and freedom of movement in the outdoor play area supervised by the adults. A rostered outdoor play system is in operation for both pre-school rooms 1 and 2. Children enjoyed the Bear hunt story with actions in pre-school room 1 supported by the adults. Children in pre-school room 2 were observed to enjoy free play and various tabletop activities.

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Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands and went to the toilet supervised by the adults. Children engaged in conversations with the staff and their friends as they sat together in the pre-school rooms for snack time. Children were encouraged to dress themselves in hats and coats for outdoor play.

A staff biography is displayed in the service. The staff were positive and respectful when speaking to children using soft language tones. Staff were familiar with children and their personality. Individual names were used and eye contact maintained with the children during play activities and while sitting with the children at snack time. Access and inclusion plans were in place for children requiring extra support and supervision.

Upon discussion the staff member informed the inspector that partnership with parents occurs in the following ways: There is an open-door policy for parents to come into the service. A verbal handover is given on collection. Children's play activities and updates are communicated through a social media application (SMS). The theme of the week "excavator" is displayed in the window of the pre-school rooms for parents to view on a daily basis. Children's artwork and detailed child development observations are shared with parents regularly during the pre-school term. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play activities are presented to the parents on graduation day in June.

Links to the local community were maintained as the designated person in charge informed the inspector that there was a recent visit to the service from a coffee shop owner who won an award and brought baked goods to the children and staff in the service.

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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.

(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 indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners. Age-appropriate toys and materials were available to children in pre-school room 1 and 2. Extra supplies of toys and materials for available for children's use. Upon discussion with the inspector, the room leader in pre-school room 2 detailed the change up of toys and equipment on a regular basis arising from the children's emerging interests.

(b)

Rest areas were provided in pre-school rooms 1 and 2.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by high walls and gates. There is a sheltered area for children to use in inclement weather and an open area with a tarmac surface. A soft absorbent surface was noted. Toys and equipment included a set of swings, sand play, water funnels, a wooden kitchen, construction bench, tricycles and bicycles.

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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

The parents provide healthy snacks for children attending the sessional service. Children enjoyed sandwiches, crackers, a selection of fruit, vegetables and yoghurts with water to drink. Children are encouraged to drink water and serve themselves from the water station provided in the pre-school rooms.

Snacks were stored in the refrigerator which was maintained within the correct limits in pre-school rooms 1 and 2.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Safety checklists were noted for the pre-school rooms.

The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. Signs were displayed in the grounds of the community centre and the pre-school service for the public to drive slowly and safely.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were available for review. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. Windows provided natural ventilation in the pre-school rooms and in the sanitary accommodation. Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste. Children washed their hands before the snack and after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was stored inaccessible to children in the office and was available if a child should get a high temperature. There were no children in the service requiring medication.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes from both buildings were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service. Upon discussion with the inspector staff demonstrated their knowledge of the fire evacuation from the service.

Outing

The designated person in charge stated the service conducts regular outings from the service. The risk assessment for the most recent outing and service's outing policy was reviewed by the inspector.

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.

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(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

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

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

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.

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- (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)
- Seven adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
- An equipped first aid box was located in the pre-school rooms.
- (b)
- A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children 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

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(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,*
- (b) an employee, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that a record referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 5 years after its creation

(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 24 March 2026.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in January 2026.

(2)

The fire records were open to inspection to (a)(b)(c).

(3)

Documentation indicated that records in respect of (2) were retained for a period of 5 years.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the pre-school rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

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Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available for review which covered the number of children attending the service and was valid until the 28 March 2027.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-

- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
- (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
- (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service's complaints policy was available and reviewed. The relevant details in respect of (a)(b)(c) were noted in the policy.