

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY034		
Name of Service:	Clonbullogue Community Pre-School Ltd.		
Address of Service:	Health Centre, Clonbullogue, Co. Offaly		
Eircode:	R45 P381		
Name of Registered Provider:	Gráinne Gallagher Ridgeway		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	25/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4		
Inspection undertaken by:	A Spain		
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.		

Description of service

Clonbullogue Community Pre-School Ltd is located in a health centre building in Clonbullogue, rural north Offaly. The service cares for children in the age range 2 to 6 years. The service is operational between 9.00am and 12.00pm for 38 weeks of the year. The service has the sole use of the rooms currently in use in the building. There are two playrooms, sanitary accommodation for children and staff, a storage area and a combined kitchen and office area in use by the service. An enclosed play area is provided at both the front and side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two staff members to work in the service and is available in a supportive capacity as required.

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 – Management and recruitment:

Regulation 19 – Health, welfare and development of child,

Regulation 25 – First aid,

Regulation 26 – Fire safety measures,

Regulation 27 – Supervision,
Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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 member 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.*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

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

(b)

Both the designated person in charge and the named person to deputise were present in the service on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

It was observed on inspection that the registered provider and staff member had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to meeting the children's care needs.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written references from past employers were held on file in respect of the registered provider. Three written and validated references from reputable sources and one written and validated reference from a past employer were held on file in respect of the two staff members working in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were held on file in respect of the registered provider and two staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was not required none of the staff had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as adults.

(3)

Records available confirmed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were conducted prior to the appointment of staff to work in the service.

(4)

All staff working in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education varying from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

Records were held in the service to confirm that staff had received and read the policies, procedures and statements of the service as specified in Schedule 5.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

A hard copy of the service policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 was available in the service. A summary of the service policies, procedures and statements as furnished to parents in the form of a parent's information handbook was also available in the service. Records were available to indicate that parents and guardians had received the service policies and procedures. Records were also held on file to advise of any updates or revisions to policies and procedures. For example, records were available which confirmed that the mission statement for the service was updated in February 2025.

The inspector reviewed the accident and incident policy for the service and the corresponding accident and incident book for the service. Accidents and incidents recorded for the 10 September and 19 September 2024 confirmed that the policy was followed in relation to the recording of accidents and incidents and the provision of parental information following these incidents.

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 caring for the children. Two adults cared for a total of eight children on arrival of the inspector and for the duration of the inspection. The staff roster confirmed that both staff members were rostered in attendance.

(3)
The inspector reviewed both the children's attendance records and the staff roster for the weeks beginning the 10 February 2025. Records confirmed that the maximum number of children in daily attendance was nine children with two staff members present 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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The two separate playrooms and extensive enclosed outdoor play area offered children plenty of space to move about freely both indoors and outdoors.
- The sanitary accommodation off playroom 1 and in the hallway were provided with hop-ups at wash handbasins, thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels for children's use after supervised toileting.
- Children's drinking water beakers were taken outdoors for children to avail of water as required. The service operated a rolling snack time. Children were observed taking their lunchboxes from the refrigerator located in playroom two and sitting at the picnic table in the outdoor shelter area when they chose to take break and eat their snack.
- The "soft world area" in playroom one was furnished with a low-level couch, cushions and a book stand for children to relax and rest as needed.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The playrooms in the service were brightly painted, clean and uncluttered. Play and work equipment was located on low level shelving and in labelled boxes for ease of access by preschool children. The playrooms were organised into areas of interest which included learning, practical life, education of the senses, numeracy, literacy and language areas.
- The service has a range of materials and toys that provided for stimulation, exploration and imaginative play experiences. Play equipment included wooden jigsaws, pegboards, nuts and bolts, matching and memory games, magnetic toys, shapes and straws. A variety of arts and crafts materials included paints, colours, pencils, stencils and glitter was available. The children's arts and crafts work was on display around the playroom walls.

- The outdoor play environment was a replica of the indoor play environment to facilitate daily outdoor play. In addition, wheel along toys, bicycles, balancing toys were provided on a smooth all-weather surface in the front play area. A sandpit, buckets and shovels, cones, wooden shapes, sweeping brushes and rakes were provided in a construction area. An alternative area housed timber blocks, wheelbarrows, wooden tool benches, work tables constructed with wooden pallets, mud kitchens, swings and a slide. The planting and growing area had a supply of compost in bags and growing pots with herbs and flowers.
- Two separate open areas which were roofed with perspex and the outdoor “village shop” ensured that children could avail of outdoor play during inclement weather conditions. On the day of inspection, children were observed to enjoy playing on the ride on toys, playing with dolls and prams, drawing with chalk, digging and playing shop outdoors.

Supporting Relationships around Children:

- Children played outdoors in groups and moved around the varied interest areas for the duration of the inspection. The staff present spoke in friendly tones to the children and assisted children as necessary for example to make a turn on a bicycle.
- Staff were observed to play games with the children which included “outdoor statues to music” singing games and story time before the children went home.
- Pictures of the children were posted on a wall outdoors to foster a sense of belonging.
- Parents and guardians were spoken to informally at collection time at drop off and collection times. Formal meetings with parents and guardians were also offered and arranged on request.
- The service operates from a community building. Records of agendas and committee meetings held to support the running of the service were furnished by the registered provider.

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) Two staff members working in the service had up to date FAR training with an expiry date of 25 November 2026.
- (2)(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available in a high level press in playroom one and on a high level shelf in playroom two.
- (b) First aid boxes were easily accessible to staff caring for the children in attendance.

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)

The service maintained a record of fire drills as they occurred in the service. The last monthly fire drill was recorded on 4 February 2025.

(b)

The maintenance record for the firefighting equipment confirmed that an annual service was conducted in November 2024. The maintenance record for the smoke alarm system confirmed that a service was conducted on 14 February 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in the hallway in the service. A fire assembly point was posted on the stone wall at the front of the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Staff were observed to supervise the children by sight and sound for the duration of the inspection. Staff were observed to be within earshot of the children when they went indoors to use toilets and supervised handwashing after children used toilets and before children had snacks and breaks outdoors. The outdoor storage sheds were used by staff to store toys the children were not using daily and ensured a variety of toys and play equipment was available and rotated outdoors for childrens use.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 22 children in daily attendance in a sessional service. Insurance was valid from the 28 March 2024 to the 27 March 2025.