

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN002
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Name of Service:	Ardcarne Community Childcare Service Ltd
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Address of Service:	Cootehall NS, Cootehall, Boyle, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F52 TV26
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sinead Slein
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	14/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon.
Inspection undertaken by:	Aileen Kennedy
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

This part time service is provided from a classroom of the local primary school. It is within close proximity of the village of Cootehall, Co. Roscommon. It is registered to provide a part time service from 9am to 13hrs.

It was advised during the inspection that it is presently operating a sessional service from 9.15 to 12.15hrs Monday to Friday for children from 2 years 8 months to 5 years.

The premises is a single storey building with one room and associated sanitary accommodation. A car park is provided to the side of the building for staff and parental use. An outdoor area is provided to the rear of the premises with direct access from the preschool room.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children and has employed a person in charge. There are three adults employed in the service and two relief staff are available in event of staff absence.

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 Regulations 9,11,19,23,25,26,28 and 29. 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 inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) This service is listed on the national register of early years services as operating a part time service from 09-13:00hrs and 13:30hrs and 14.10hrs to 18:00hrs Monday to Friday.

During the inspection it was advised by the designated person in charge that the service operates only from 9:15hrs to 12:15hrs Monday to Friday. The service did not notify the Agency in writing of this change of hours of operation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to advise that a change in circumstance form has been completed, submitted and approved by Tusla and they will check their paperwork and correspondence frequently to ensure it is in order.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Evidence was submitted of the change in circumstance form submitted to registration office.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8 has been adequately addressed.

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)

There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b)

The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

The files for five staff were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b)

Ten references on file in respect of the five staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the five staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Two of the staff had worked outside the jurisdiction, for six months or more, while over the age of 18 years of age and had the required police vetting.

(4) The five staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 or over, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were fifteen pre-school children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 5 years. There were three staff working directly with the children.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were two staff on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

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 as children were observed to learn through play. A key person system was in operation to help promote emotional security for each child attending the service. Staff sat with the children at snack time promoting conversation and interaction.

Children were given the opportunity to take their time having their snack and enjoyed a healthy snack.

Staff were observed to be positive towards the children in their care evidenced by soft language tones and use of children's individual names during activities.

A positive teamwork approach was observed during the inspection.

The pre-school room was bright, spacious and colourful. Low level tables and chairs were provided and low-level shelving with equipment and materials were accessible to the children.

The playroom was equipped with dolls, and play accessories, a kitchen, kitchen equipment and utensils in a home area.

Jigsaws puzzles, blocks, shapes and bricks of different sizes and dimensions were noted for tabletop activities.

Sand and water trays were available for messy play. Arts and crafts materials and paint was provided and a storey corner in the room.

A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Displayed on the walls was a family tree, our amazing artwork, our birthdays, children's artwork and posters on months of the year, the seasons, days of the week, class rules, colours and the daily routine.

A cosy area was provided in the playroom with a soft floor mat, soft couches and cushions for children to rest and opt out of activities as required.

The outdoor play area was located to the rear of the pre-school premises with direct access from the pre-school room and was laid out with a climbing frame and a slide, a selection of bikes/trikes, a picnic tables, a large sand pit, a mud kitchen and planting opportunities. A storage space was available to store play equipment.

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:

- Waste disposal facilities were inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The entrance door of the pre-school service was secured on arrival to the service and remained secured throughout the inspection thus preventing children from exiting and unauthorised persons from entering the premises.
- A lock was provided on the gate in the outdoor area to prevent a child from exiting and unauthorised person from entering the area.
- Cleaning products were stored in a high press in the kitchenette area which was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were no trailing flexes in the service.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the playroom.
- A staff member accompanied children to the sanitary area to ensure child safety.
- The fire exit routes in the playroom and the hallway were free from obstruction.
- Toys and play equipment were non-toxic and in good condition.

Infection Control:

- A wash hand basin with hot and cold-water supply was provided in the preschool room for children to wash their hands after play, before break times and after play in the outdoor area.
- A dispenser with disposable paper towels was wall mounted beside the wash hand basin. Liquid soap was provided.
- The openable windows in the playroom ensured a good flow of fresh air directly from outside into the room when children played indoors.
- Foot pedal operated lidded bins were provided in the service for the disposal of waste.
- A refrigerator was available for the storage of the children's perishable foods.
- The water in the sanitary areas was thermostatically controlled to ensure effective hand washing. The temperatures taken on the day was 36°C which is within the recommended range of maximum 43°C for effective handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

- Through discussion with the inspector, the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the administration of medicines.
- There were no medications administered to the children on the day of the inspection.
- The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection

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) Three staff members and the two relief persons had completed First Aid Responder training in July 2025 and were awaiting the issue of their certificates.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box was stored on a high shelf, clearly labelled and inaccessible to the children.

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 firefighting 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 record of fire drills was maintained on the premises, and it was noted that the last monthly fire drill was recorded as conducted on the 10th of November 2025.

(b) A record of maintenance of firefighting equipment confirmed that the extinguishers were serviced in August 2025 and the smoke alarm confirmed that an annual service was conducted on 1st of September 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display on the notice board in the preschool room and the fire assembly point was positioned in the playground of the national school.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 27/03/2026 covered 22 part time children and included the following,

- public liability,
- personal accident,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- outings undertaken as part of the service

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 appeared to be of a sound and stable structure on the day of inspection with no evidence of dampness or mould growth on internal walls and ceilings. Windows and doors were in a good state of repair and appeared to be both watertight and weather tight when closed.

(b) The outdoor play area was safely secured with a combination of fencing and a gate at the rear of the premises to guard against unauthorised access.

The service was connected to both the public drainage and water supply.

(c) The openable windows in the room in the service and ceiling mounted fluorescent light fittings which were covered with shatter proof diffusers ensures a good mix of natural and artificial lighting and ventilation in the premises. The oil fuelled radiators were thermostatically controlled to ensure a maximum surface temperature of 50°C.

(d) The walls in the room in the service and heavy-duty floor lino throughout the premises were clean and well maintained on the day of inspection.

(e) Two separate toilets and two wash hand basins provided adequate sanitary accommodation for a maximum of 22 children in daily attendance in the service at any one time.

A wall mounted nappy changing unit and a dedicated wash hand basin was provided for nappy changing.

A separate toilet and wash hand basin was provided for staff use.

Wash hand basins were serviced with thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, disposable paper towels and foot pedal operated bins.

Openable windows provided ventilation in both the children's and staff toilet areas.