

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN026		
Name of Service:	Hollyhocks Creche		
Address of Service:	Cloonslanour, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon		
Eircode:	F42 K230		
Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Cosgrove		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	07/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM 41

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon
Inspection undertaken by:	A Kennedy and K Folan
Title:	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
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Description of service

This full day care is located within a short distance of the town Strokestown, Co. Roscommon. It caters for children from 0 to 6 years of age. This pre-school service is registered to operate a full day care from 7:30hrs to 18:30hrs, Monday to Friday. The service also provides an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care programmes. The premises is on its own grounds and comprises of two buildings, one with five ground floor pre-school rooms namely the Baby wobbler room, the Wobbler room, the Toddler room 1, Toddler room 2, Pre-school room 1. There is a designated sleep room with five cots, for children under two years of age, sleep provision in the main building. There are stackable beds available for older children's sleep provision. There is a kitchen where children's meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site.

The second building namely Preschool room 2 has two interlinked playrooms, sanitary accommodation and a kitchenette. There are outdoor play areas to the rear of the premises for children's play and exploration. A school aged programme is also offered. There is a designated prefabrication unit to the rear of the premises for the school aged programme. On the day of inspection, there were fifteen school aged children attending the service.

Staffing

There are sixteen adults including the registered provider employed in the service.

Thirteen adults hold a qualification at Level 5 or over in early childhood care or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. There is an auxiliary person who acts as administrator, chef, and maintenance person and two students were also in attendance on a college work placement.

An additional two adults were designated to the care of the school aged 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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, the 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*

(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 registered provider was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider and the deputy designated person in charge were on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy, were available on the premises, at all times, when the pre-school children were present.

(2) There are fifteen adults and two students on a work placement working in the service and all staff files were reviewed.

(a)&(b) Thirty written validated references, on file for the adults, and four written validated references were on file for the two students on a work placement and were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was on file for three adults who had resided outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 months, while over the age of 18 years.

(4) Thirteen adults held at least a major award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5 and over in Early Childhood Care and Education, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Copies of qualifications were on file for the thirteen adults.

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) (a) A registered provider of a preschool service other than a childminding service or a sessional preschool service shall ensure there at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults 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 50 pre-school children

- There were seven children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- There were twelve children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- There were thirty-one children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 41 pre-school children

- There were eight children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- There were twelve children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- There were twenty-one children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were ten adults working directly with the pre-school children. On the day of inspection, the registered provider and the deputy person in charge assisted with the administration function of the inspection and provided relief as required in the preschool rooms throughout the day.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises 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

- The staff encouraged and supported the children to be as independent, as possible
- The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The staff complied with the service's healthy eating policy.
- Nutritious meals were provided by the service which were served at regular times and no more than 3 hours apart.
- Each child had enough time to eat and enjoy their meals and snacks without being rushed.
- The tables and chairs and highchairs were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The staff encouraged children to feed themselves independently, according to their age and stage of development.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils were suitable for the children's ages and stages of development.
- The staff responded to children's individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training. On the day of inspection, sixteen children wore nappies and were changed on a regular basis.
- The privacy and dignity of a child having their nappy changed was maintained. The older children in the pre-school rooms, had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilet. The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting and nappy changing. The staff responded to children's cues quickly.
- Picture and word reminders and instructions were displayed and used as aid memoirs.
- The staff provided for each child's comfort and need for rest, relaxation in each of the playrooms. The pre-school rooms had safe and comfortable spaces for babies and toddlers to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk and be protected from children who were more mobile.
- The children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

- Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. Children were aware of routines and daily transitions were seamless and made as comfortable as possible for example going outside, getting ready for meals and sleep provision
- The children were observed at free play, connecting, stacking, building, and linking. and doing puzzles and tabletop activities. The children played with transport vehicles, toy kitchen, soft toys, farm toys, baby dolls, dinosaurs and dress up.
- The staff used visual aids and probed with questions such as ‘who is this?’, ‘how many are there?’, and ‘where is that?’. The children enjoyed action songs, mealtime songs and children’s learning songs.
- The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by having a key person system for each child, showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language, using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
- The staff provided opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging.
- The staff provided opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.
- The staff advised that they work in partnership with the parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child’s interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.
- On speaking with the staff, the inspectors were informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child’s experiences in the service including the child’s likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times, via text messages, and by phone call and via a bespoke childcare application.
- The staff ensured that the children had ongoing opportunities to interact informally with one another for example at free play, parallel play, outdoor play and eating together.
- The staff encouraged and praised the children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours.
- On the day of the inspection, the staff showed kindness, were caring, supportive and reassuring whilst caring for the children.

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 children were actively supervised whilst playing in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor areas.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Blinds cords were secured by fasteners and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- There were restrictive access devices on the low-level windows as a safety precaution.
- The waste bins both indoors and outdoors were inaccessible to the children.
- There was a designated staff room in a prefabrication unit, ensuring adults consumed hot drinks away from and not within reach of children.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all of children attending the playrooms.
- Documented risk assessments for the playrooms and outdoor play areas were available for review
- The external door had a buzzer access system and was appropriately secured to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access and unauthorised persons gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured by walls, fencing and gates so that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or children could not exit unsupervised.
- The main door into the kitchen, the door into the staff toilet and office had a system of security.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting / nappy changing, outdoor play, messy play and after blowing their noses. The children washed their hands under supervision prior to their snacks and mealtimes.
- The children's belongings for nappy changing were individually labelled and in designated storage containers.
- The children's barrier creams were clearly individually labelled and stored within the nappy changing areas.
- The nappy changing areas had a leak-proof, sealable airtight container for the disposal of nappies.

- The nappy changing policy was displayed on the walls of the nappy changing areas and staff completed nappy changing records for each child requiring a nappy change.
- There were cleaning schedules and records for the playrooms, sanitary areas, and outdoor areas and on the cleaning and disinfection procedure undertaken in the service.
- Tabletops, highchairs and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playrooms.

Administration of medication

- There were no medications administered to children on the day of the inspection.
- Medicines were stored in their original labelled container in a safe and secure way, in a high press in the kitchen.
- The adults knew the requirements and had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to the policy on administration of medication.
- The adults demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the storage and administration of medication should it be required, to be administered in the service.
- Sunscreen lotions were suitably consistently clearly individually labelled,

Safe Sleep:

- There was a designated sleep room, opposite the Baby wobbler room, with 5 cots for children under 2 years of age. Additionally, there were stackable beds available in the Wobbler and Toddler rooms, for older children's sleep provision.
- The cots were in good condition; with the mattresses having a recognised safety standard and cots were at least 50cm apart.
- There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements
- Cellular blankets were used for children under two years of age. All linen provided was clean,
- The cots, safety mattresses and stackable beds were maintained in a proper state of repair.
- Rest / quiet areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he/she chose to.

Fire Safety

- The emergency exits were observed to be free from obstructions at all times during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- Garda vetting was available for the staff members. However, three of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Safe Sleep:

- It was advised during the inspection that two children under two years of age in the baby wobbler room do not sleep in their assigned cots and are slept on baby chairs or on the lap of the staff member.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response on 7th of July to state

General safety

- The garda vetting had been applied for and we had not received the re-vetting back on time. We now have all staff's Garda Vetting up to date. and we will set a reminder to reapply for Garda Vetting every three years for all staff.

Safe Sleep:

2. We spoke with the parents verbally and put a plan in place to get the children sleeping in their own cots. We will ensure all parents are informed of our safe sleep policy when they settle their children into the creche.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentary evidence was submitted of the renewed garda vetting disclosures for three staff.

Safe Sleep:

- No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspectors have reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed and will be reviewed on next 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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Five adults had current training in first aid for children.
- (2)(a) There were three first aid boxes with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had appropriate insurance in place for 125 children in full day care up to 27 March 2026.