

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015RN049
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Name of Service:	Strokestown Community Playschool Ltd
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Address of Service:	Lisroyne, Strokestown, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	F42 X335
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Shiel
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	05/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	N/A
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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:	A 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 preschool service offers the options of a part time care provision from 9.00hrs to 14.00hrs and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional programme from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs, from Monday to Friday. The preschool caters for children aged between 2 years to 6 years of age. Additionally, a school age programme from 8.00hrs to 9.10hrs and from 13.50hrs to 18.00hrs is offered. A child centred play based preschool curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided.

The preschool service is in a detached purpose-built premises on its own grounds, in the town of Strokestown, Co. Roscommon.

There are two playrooms, namely Preschool room 1 and Preschool room 2, on the ground floor. Additionally, there are two school aged rooms and a sensory room on the first floor.

On the day of inspection only Preschool room 1, was in use for the preschool children. The premises has its own kitchen, where children's meals are stored on site.

Quiet rest areas are available in the form of child size soft seating where children could rest or relax if they so choose. The pre-school children have direct access to secure outdoor play areas at the rear of the premises for children's play activities, fresh air, and exploration.

Staffing

The registered provider is supernumerary and does not work in the service. There is a named person in charge and there is a named designated deputy. On the day of inspection, there were two staff working directly with the preschool children. Additionally, there is a service chef working in the service.

The person in charge acted as childcare relief and assisted with the administration parts of the inspection.

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 and 28. 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, deputy person in charge and 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 childcare manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The deputy manager was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived at 10:15hrs and the manager arrived on site at 11.30hrs 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 staff files for all staff were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) 10 of the 10 validated references on file in respect of the 5 staff members were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was 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 four staff members working directly with the children and had evidence of a childcare qualification to at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 7 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection, there were 5 preschool children present with 2 staff working directly with, caring, and supervising these children.

The 5 children were aged between 3 and 5 years and attending the service's Early Childhood Care and Education. (ECCE) pre-school care programme and sessional programme from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs.

(2) It was advised by the person in charge that presently there is no child attending on a part-time basis.

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

- Hand washing was carried out regularly in the setting by the children with gentle reminders from the adults after toileting, prior to consuming snack, after messy play and outdoor play.
- The children sat at low tables for their morning snack accompanied by the adults in the preschool room.
- Adequate tables and chairs were provided for the children, and they were encouraged to self-feed and assisted by the staff if necessary.
- A healthy eating policy was in place in the service. It was observed that the children consumed their snack at 11.10am. There was evidence of healthy eating with the children consuming a selection of fresh fruit, crackers, rolls, wraps, sandwiches and yoghurts and yoghurt drinks. Juice and water were available as drinks.
- The snack time was unhurried, and the children were encouraged to be independent.

- There was a cosy area in the preschool room which could be adapted as a rest area for the children to rest or opt out of activities if they so wished.
- Children were encouraged by the adults to do things for themselves and be self-caring around their toileting needs.
- The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the playroom throughout the session.
- 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. The children could move about freely and explore their environments. The children were observed at free play, doing art and craft activities, having an afternoon tea party, playing in the home area, playing in a newly adapted Santa's grotto, playing in the construction area and dress up area.
- The staff acknowledged a child's achievements, and the children were observed having fun.
- In the adjoining outdoor play area, there was a sheltered space, a large sand play area, climbing frames, a selection of bikes/trikes and scooters and wall mounted chalk boards.
- 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 listening 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, providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
- providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children. They cared for children by being supportive while the children engaged in free play, role play, and creative play. A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'.

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:

- Children were observed to be actively supervised by the adults at all times
- The entrance doors into the pre-school were secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area was secured thus preventing potential unauthorised persons access and or entry into the premises.
- Toys and play equipment were developmentally appropriate, kept in good repair and did not pose an injury risk to children.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- The water was thermostatically controlled with a temperature reading of 37.7°C on the day of inspection.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that the children washed their hands regularly throughout the inspection to include, prior to consuming snack, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The playroom and sanitary accommodations had foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.

Administration of Medication:

- 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:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency.
- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

- It was advised by the person in charge that the children have an annual outing to a play centre.
- The service had insurance for outings.
- The person in charge ensured that parents provide consent, a risk assessment is carried out prior to the outing, emergency numbers are brought and there was a staff member with first aid training.
- The first aid box is brought on the outing, in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The wooden frame to prevent children accessing the boiler was not fixed to the wall on one end and could pose a potential safety concern.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The person in charge submitted a written response to advise the guard has been fixed to ensure children's safety. All safety equipment will be checked regularly as part of daily and weekly risk assessment.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic and documentary evidence was submitted of the guard secured to the wall to prevent the children accessing the boiler and a copy of the risk assessment.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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. Three staff members had current training in first aid for children.

(2)(a) A first aid cabinet was available in the hallway inaccessible to the preschool child.

It contained an adequate quantity of first aid items for the numbers of children attending the service at any one time. and was readily available in the event a child required first aid treatment.

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 written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was on 10/11/2025.

(b) The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 10/06/2025.

(4) Notices were displayed within the hallway and the preschool room of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) The service record for the firefighting equipment advised it was last serviced on 1/11/2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The person in charge submitted a written response to the office of the early years inspectorate to advise that the extinguishers have been serviced on 5th of December 2025 and the Fire safety documentation will be kept up to

date and readily available. A contract is in place for fire extinguishers to be serviced yearly to ensure ongoing compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

The person in charge submitted the certificate of the service record of the fire extinguishers.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed.

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 27th of March 2026 was for 22 children per session and included the following -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- buildings insurance,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.