

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY017
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Name of Service:	Caterpillars Childcare (Newport)
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Address of Service:	Coole, Newport, Co. Tipperary
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Eircode:	V94 EP44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Harte
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/07/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	34
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
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Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 service was established to provide care and education to children aged 0 – 6 years. A registered school aged care service is also provided to children of primary school age.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 7.30am – 6pm for 51 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from a single storey detached premises in a rural area near the town of Newport. This former residential premises was converted and extended for use as a childcare service. There are five activity rooms, a kitchen, sleep room and sanitary accommodation areas in the main building. Additional space is provided by prefabricated buildings installed at the back of the premises which include two activity rooms, an office and further sanitary accommodation areas. There are outdoor play areas at the back and front of the premises, including covered and open areas.

This is a sister service to Caterpillars Childcare, Rearcross and Caterpillars Childcare, Killeen. All three services are located in North Tipperary.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service. There is also a service manager, quality manager and chef. On the day of inspection there were 12 staff working directly with the children, which included both early years and 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11(1)(2)(8), 15(1), 20(1)(3), 23 and 29.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment and regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child.

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, 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-

- (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;*

(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of inspection, with the service manager available to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge or a deputy was present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

(c) There was a clear line of authority and accountability within the service. Each member of staff had specific roles and responsibilities within the service.

The files of three members of staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 16 August 2022 were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of the three members of staff.

(b) Not applicable as all available references were from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents stored on file.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(3) Vetting procedures, including acquisition and validation of references, review of qualifications and Garda vetting were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to the children in the service.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the early years children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6, 7, 8 or 9 on the national qualifications framework.

(7) Staff engaged in ongoing professional development which included further studies towards the next level in early childhood care and education, first aid, manual handling, positive behaviour management, supporting children with ASD in the early years setting, supporting anxious children, creative mindfulness and introduction to play therapy. The registered provider recently conducted an 'employee satisfaction survey' and was in the process of implementing changes in response to it. Actions included moving staff to different rooms and age cohorts to expand their experience and introducing a staff newsletter to share information and updates related to policies and practice as well as celebrating personal achievements and special occasions.

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) There were 9 staff working directly with 34 early years children on the morning of the inspection. There were an additional 3 staff present who were not counted in these adult/child ratios as they were working with the 21 school aged children who were present in the service. The presence of the school aged children did not have a negative impact on the adult/child ratio required for the early years children. The registered provider and service manager were available to provide relief in the rooms if required. The chef and quality manager were not included in the adult/child ratios.

(2) The adult/child ratio was maintained within the recommended ratios in each area throughout the day. The children spent most of the day outside and were located in one of three areas: The 7 babies and toddlers were in the covered outdoor area beside their room, with 3 staff; the 9 children from the Clubhouse were in the open outdoor area in front of their room with 2 staff; the 18 older early years children and 21 school aged children were in the back outdoor play area with 7 staff.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample registration form and five completed forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The forms contained all of the required information as detailed under subsections (a) – (j) above.

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) The children had access to a total of seven activity rooms which included: the Baby/Toddler room, Clubhouse, Pre-school room 1 and 2 and Little Me sensory room in the main house, plus ECCE room 1 and 2 in the prefabricated building. Each room had cosy areas where the children could rest and there was a sleep room for infants. The rooms were well laid out and furnished suitable to the age and stage of development of the children who used the room. There were outdoor play areas at the front and back of the premises.

(b) The sleep room was furnished with six standard cots with fitted mattresses where the younger children could sleep when they needed to. There were two more cots in the Clubhouse for the older children who preferred to sleep in a cot for their daytime sleeps. This room also had sleep beds and sleep mats that were laid out on the floor in the afternoon for the children who wanted to sleep. Pre-school room 2 was also available as a sleep or rest room where camp beds could be laid out for children that wanted to sleep. Individual sheets and blankets were available for each child.

(3)(a) The outdoor play area at the back of the premises had been extended and further developed since the last inspection in August 2022. The open shed was removed and the boundary fence was extended to provide more space for the children. The registered provider had purchased a retired coach that was being developed into a sensory room and to provide an additional outdoor play space that could be used in all weathers. The coach was sited in the back outdoor play area.

There were open areas and covered areas in both outdoor play spaces to allow children to play outdoors and experience a change of environment every day, regardless of the weather. The children spent long periods playing outdoors during the summer months.

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 front door of the premises was kept secured, entry and exit was managed by staff.

Children were only permitted to leave the service in the company of an adult who had been named by the child's parent or guardian. In the event that someone other than the named person arrived to collect the child, staff phoned the parents or guardians to confirm that the child could be released into their care.

The outdoor play areas were fenced and gated to prevent the children exiting the service without supervision and to prevent unauthorised access to the premises. Unsafe areas were closed off to the children, such as the new coach/outdoor sensory room which was under development.

The children did not have access to the kitchen.

Infection Control:

The service had an infection control policy.

There was a sink, liquid soap, paper towels and a lidded bin at the front door where staff, children and visitors to the service could wash their hands before entering the premises.

The service had a cleaning schedule and signed cleaning sheets evidenced the works carried out. The premises was visibly clean. The rooms were in the process of being cleared out and reorganised in preparation for the new school year.

Administration of Medication:

The service had a policy on administration of medication which included both prescription and non-prescription medications. There were individual care plans for children with allergies or illnesses which required emergency medical interventions, such as administration of adrenaline injections. Medications and instructions for administration of the medications were stored together in a cupboard in the kitchen. Information regarding the child's medical issue and management plan was also included in the child's file in electronic and paper formats.

Safe Sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. The sleep room temperature was maintained within the recommended range of 16 - 20°C. On the day of inspection the sleep room was 20°C. The children were monitored while they slept and a record was maintained of sleep checks.

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 sound and stable structure.
- (b) The premises was safe and secure. Entry and exit to and from the premises was through the front door, which was managed by the service manager or other designated staff. The outdoor play areas were enclosed so that the children could not gain access to unsafe areas such as the road or stream at the front of the site.
- (c) The rooms were lit with natural light, supplemented by artificial light when required. The rooms in the main building were heated by radiators as part of an oil-fired central heating system. The rooms in the prefabricated buildings were heated by wall mounted electric heaters. The heating systems were not required on the day of inspection as the weather was warm. The rooms were cooled by use of portable air-conditioning units. On the day of inspection, Pre-School room 2 was used as a cool relaxation room, where the children could rest away from activities when they wanted to. The rooms were naturally ventilated to the external air through openable windows and doors. The service also used portable electric air purifiers in some of the rooms. Rooms were maintained within the recommended range of 18 - 22°C for activity rooms and 16 - 20°C for the sleep room. An electronic room thermometer, that was regularly reset and tested to make sure it was working correctly, was used in the sleep room. The sleep room was 20°C on the day of inspection. The window blinds were kept down and the windows were opened when the room was empty to help keep the room cool in the summer. A portable air-conditioning unit, suitable to the size of the sleep room, was also used to manage the room temperature.

(d) The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning activities were recorded on cleaning sheets when completed. The service employed staff to carry out repairs and maintenance tasks as required. The premises was in good repair.

(e) The service had installed additional sanitary accommodation since the last inspection in August 2022. Two toilets and wash hand basins in separate prefabricated buildings were installed adjacent to the office and the outdoor play area at the back of the premises, giving extra provision for staff and children. The water for hand washing was heated by electric under-sink heating units. There were also sanitary accommodation areas in the main building and in the prefabricated building. In total the service had two toilets and wash hand basins for staff, four toilets and wash hand basins for the children and two nappy changing areas. This was sufficient provision for up to 16 staff, 44 toilet trained children and 22 children who were not yet toilet trained.