

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY047
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Stars Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Drom National School, Drom, Templemore, Co Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 PC86
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Anne Cunningham
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/01/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	8	PM	-
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

This sessional service was established in 2003 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Tuesday – Friday, 9.15am – 12.45pm for 38 weeks of the year. Places are funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is operated from a large room in Drom National School in the village of Drom in north Tipperary. The room is located in a section of the school that is separated from the main body of the school by a secured door.

The space used by the pre-school service includes the pre-school room, sanitary accommodation areas and storage space. The children have direct access to the grounds at the front of the school for outdoor play.

### Staffing

The registered provider works directly in the service with the children on a daily basis. There is a person available in the school to call on in the event of an emergency.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(3)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(a), 23, 24(1)(3), 25(1)(2) and 28.

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 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 the designated person in charge.

(b) The registered provider was available in the service while it was in operation.

The service closed if the registered provider was not available to work.

The staff file of the registered provider was reviewed as part of the inspection.

(2)(a) Not applicable as the available references were not from past employers.

(b) There were two written references available from sources other than past employers.

(c) Garda vetting was available in respect of the registered provider. There was a process in place to ensure Garda was re-assessed on a three yearly basis, in line with the requirements of Tula.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of years spent living outside the State.

(4) The registered provider held recognised qualifications at levels 5, 6 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

### 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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) There were eight children being supervised by the registered provider for the duration of the inspection. The children were aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years old and attended on a sessional basis.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1:8 which was greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11.

(8)(c) The registered provider operated the service single-handedly. There was a named person who could be called on in the event of an emergency to provide assistance. The second person worked in the National School and was close at hand if required.

### 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.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

*(c) an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registration forms of the eight children enrolled in the service were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The information required to be kept in respect of each child, as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation, was available.

(3)(c) The required written records were maintained in the service and available for inspection by an authorised person.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*

*(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*

*(b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*

*(c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*

*(d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*

*(e) the facilities available;*

*(f) the opening hours and fees;*

*(g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

*(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

*(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

*(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The records and information required to be kept in relation to the service, as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation, were available.

(3) The required written records were available on the premises and open to inspection by an authorised person.

## 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) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, discussion with the registered provider and review of documentation.

### Basic needs

The children enjoyed freedom of movement both indoors and outdoors. The pre-school room was large and facilitated movement. The children had daily access to play in the outdoors. On the day of inspection, they brought out scooters to play on.

The children brought a packed lunch to eat during breaktime. They were given individual plates to put their food on. The children and staff sat together at one of the tables to eat their food in a relaxed manner with much chatter and conversation. Music was played during this time to enhance the relaxed atmosphere.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. The children brought their own drink bottles, which they could access when required and which were refilled from the tap in the room as required.

The children freely accessed the toilets in the sanitary accommodation across the corridor from the pre-school room when needed.

The children could rest and relax in the cosy spaces in the room when they wanted to.

### **Supporting relationships**

The children benefitted from being part of a small group, which supported the development of friendships.

The registered provider was observed to be caring and attentive towards the children. She listened to them and respected their preferences.

The children were observed to use good manners, such as saying please and thank you, without prompting. This mirrored the respectful manner the registered provider used in her interactions with the children.

### **Physical and material environment**

The pre-school room was well resourced and laid out in a number of interest areas which included: small world and manipulative play areas, home corner, imaginative play areas, library and cosy area, tabletop activities areas, art area and construction area. There was also a special interest table that was set up with dinosaurs on the day of inspection.

There were additional resources available for use outdoor, that were stored in an area near the front door. These included push toys, ride-on toys, balls, hoops and rackets. There were wall mounted blackboards along the front wall.

The walls of the room and a noticeboard on the corridor were decorated with samples of the children's artwork, photos of the children engaged in activities and posters of interest to the children.

On the day of inspection, the children spent long periods of time engaged in activities of choice, supported by the registered provider as required. There were planned group activities available also such as the art project: the children coloured-in fish which would be used to make a mobile.

### 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 premises was kept secured at all times. Access to the part of the school used by the service was through a door in the front of the building. The registered provider managed access to the service. This prevented any unauthorised access to the premises and prevented a child exiting the premises unsupervised.

The children used the grounds at the front of the school for outdoor play. Two children were given the role of closing the gates before the rest of the children went out to play. This ensured that the area was enclosed and prevented the children gaining access to the roadway in front of the premises.

Hot water for hand washing was heated by electric water heaters, thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. Hot water on the day of inspection was 32°C.

Most of the radiators in the service were covered, which prevented the children from accessing them. The radiators that were not covered were thermostatically controlled not to exceed 50°C. The surface temperature of the exposed radiators was 35°C on the day of inspection.

Cleaning products were stored on high shelves or locked cupboards where they could not be accessed by the children.

### Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy which included hand washing. The registered provider and children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times of the day such as before eating and after using the toilet.

### Administration of medication:

None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of inspection. The service had a policy on the administration of medication and a medication form to use in the event that medication was required to be administered to a child while attending the service.

### Fire safety:

Fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

### Outing:

There was an outings policy for the service which detailed the procedures for any outings from the service such as the annual excursion at the end of the school year.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider recorded the arrival and departure times of the children on the weekly attendance register.

(3)(a) The registered provider met all visitors to the service at the entrance door before allowing them entry to the premises if appropriate.

### 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 registered provider held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR) valid until June 2027.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box available on a high shelf in the pre-school room.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

There was valid insurance cover for a sessional service catering for a maximum of 11 children at any one time, valid until 27 March 2026.