

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY051				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Nenagh Childcare Centre				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Limerick Rd., Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
<b>Eircode:</b>	E45 X744				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Micheal McNulty				
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	24/01/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>65</td> <td>PM</td> <td>63</td> </tr> </table>	AM	65	PM	63
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary				
<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>	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 old. A registered school aged service was also provided on the premises.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 7.30am – 6pm for 51 weeks of the year. A three-hour sessional service funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is operated from purpose built, detached, single-storey premises in the town of Nenagh in North Tipperary. The main building consists of five activity rooms, two sleep rooms, sleep alcove, sanitary accommodation areas, reception area, offices, staff room, kitchen and utility room. There is also a separate modular building on the site which is used by early years children in the morning and school aged children in the afternoon. The grounds at the back and side of the premises are developed into six separate outdoor play areas.

### Staffing

The registered provider is the chairman of the board and does not work in the service.

The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are 47 staff employed in the service which includes managerial staff, administration staff, maintenance staff, catering staff and staff who work directly with the children. There were 22 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection including staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and staff employed under a community employment scheme (CES). CES staff who worked with the children and did not already hold a childcare qualification were engaged in studies towards a qualification in early childhood care and education.

### 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(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 19(1)(b), 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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 III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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

The staff files of 13 members of staff, who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 8 July 2021, were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The files of other staff were reviewed on previous inspections and found to be compliant.

(2)(a) There were written, validated references from past employers available in respect of 12 members of staff.

(b) Written, validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of 6 members of staff.

(c) Garda vetting was carried out in respect of all 13 members of staff. Relevant documents were held on file.

(d) Police vetting was carried out in respect of staff who had lived outside the jurisdiction. Relevant records were held on file including translations where relevant.

(4) Staff who worked directly with the children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 6, 7 or 8 on the national qualifications framework. Staff who were engaged in studies towards a recognised qualification in early childhood care and education were supervised at all times while working with the children.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

*(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 sufficient numbers of staff working directly with the children in each room throughout the day as detailed below. The staffing levels ensured that there were sufficient staff to support all care activities such as infant feeding, nappy changing, toileting and supervision of sleep including at times such as staff breaks.

Staff on reception and those involved in management, catering, cleaning or maintenance were additional to staff involved in direct care of the children.

In the morning the children and staff, except those from the Caterpillars room, were outside.

In the afternoon the children and staff were divided between the six activity rooms as follows:

In Caterpillars room there were five children aged 8 – 12 months old and 1 child aged 13 months old being cared for by 2 staff and a CES worker.

In Butterflies room there were 9 children aged 17 – 23 months old being cared for by 2 staff and a CES worker.

In Bumble Bees room there were 10 children aged 2 – 3 years old being cared for by 2 staff.

In Ladybirds room there were 6 children aged 2 – 3 years old and 9 children aged 3 – 4 years old being cared for by 3 staff.

In Grasshoppers room there were 14 children aged 3 – 5 years old being cared for by three staff.

In Worms room there were 9 children aged 3 - 5 years old with two staff and a CES worker.

(2) and (4) The adult to child ratios were maintained within the regulatory requirements throughout the day.

(8)(a) There were at least 2 staff present in the service while it was in operation.

### 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-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Staff were observed to be engaged with the children and supportive in all their interactions with them. Staff were responsive to the children’s verbal and non-verbal cues and were respectful of the children’s need to explore, make choices, be listened to and have their personal care needs met.

For example, the staff in Butterflies room carried out nappy changing and hand washing before dinner and waited until all of the children were seated before serving the meal so that no child felt left out or got upset that their friends had started eating before them.

The rooms were set up in a manner which supported the children’s self-directed play. The staff were available to assist the children if needed and to provide ways of extending the play by adding new props or becoming part of the play, such as joining the children at the water table. Staff also set up activities that they led, such as a Bingo game in Ladybirds room, which the children were free to join in if they wanted to.

### 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, or*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to indoor and outdoor play on a daily basis. The children had access to a designated activity room, according to their age and stage of development. Each of the rooms in the main building looked out onto the playground and all except Caterpillars room had direct access to the outdoor area from their room.

Worms room was in the modular building beside the main building.

The rooms were spacious, well resourced and well laid out in defined interest areas which guided and supported the children's self-directed learning and exploration.

(b) There was a cosy area in each room where the children could rest and relax during the day on cushions or padded mats with blankets and throws. There were two sleep rooms, one off Caterpillars room and the other off Butterflies room where the younger children slept in cots in line with their individual sleep needs and routines.

Sleep mats and camp beds were available for older children and were set up in the alcove off Bumble Bees room or in the activity rooms after dinner for the children who wanted to sleep.

(3) The grounds at the back of the premises had been developed into several separate play areas which included a playground, two wild areas, an area with a hill, tunnel and slide, a baby play area, a willow area and a polytunnel.

Each area could be used by one or two rooms at a time, which enabled children to meet and play with their siblings or children of different ages when outdoors. Each area was enclosed by wooden fencing and gates with a high concrete wall marking the boundary of the site.

The playground area had been refurbished since the last inspection in July 2021. The soft fall matting had been replaced by a new soft fall surface and the old climbing equipment had been removed and a new pirate ship unit installed with slides, monkey bars and basket swing.

The other areas had grass, gravel and soil surfaces with trees and shrubs providing natural barriers, hiding places and shelter.

Water butts were used to collect rainwater which the children used in the mud kitchens and when gardening.

One area of the grounds had been recently reseeded with new grass and was out of bounds while the grass grew.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Each room was well equipped with a range of good quality furniture, toys, materials and resources suitable to the age and stage of development of the children in each room and to the staff working with them.

There were tables and chairs in each room for tabletop activities, dining, imaginative play and relaxation suitable to the size and developmental stages of the children using each room, for example the chairs in Caterpillars and Butterflies rooms were low to the ground and had arm rests to promote a stable sitting posture for the younger children. Tray tables and safety harnesses were used with the chairs in Caterpillars room. Adult seating was also provided in each room.

In Caterpillars room there were several areas with large, padded mats to facilitate floor play and rolling. Wall mounted activity boards, mirrors and grab rails supported standing and early walking as well as exploration of textures, cause and effect and sound making. There was a sofa where the staff could sit to hold, comfort and feed a child.

In each room toys and materials were stored on open shelving units or in designated interest areas such as the kitchen in the home corner, where the children could easily access them.

Some of the rooms had wet areas with sinks and taps where the children could access water for their play and where they could wash up after art or messy activities.

There were notice boards outside each room where children could display their artwork for parents to see. There were also art installations along the corridors which the children could interact with.

The outdoor play areas were equipped with seating areas, playhouses and wooden shelters, rockers, ride-on toys, tractor tyre sand pits, slides, balance beams, a wooden gazebo, climbing equipment, push toys, mud kitchens, planting areas, spades and small vehicles.

There was an overhang that ran along the wall at the back of the premises which provided some shelter to the children when playing outdoors. This area was used for storing mobile clothing racks where the children kept their wet weather overalls and rubber boots.

There were lockable sheds in the outdoor area which were used by the maintenance staff for the storage of mowers and maintenance equipment.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy. Most of the food eaten in the service was supplied by the service, with the exception of infant's bottles of formula or breast milk. Formula was brought in made up in individual bottles and refrigerated in Caterpillars room until required.

There was a two-week menu plan which demonstrated a varied and nutritious diet.

A team of catering staff worked in the kitchen preparing, cooking and serving meals. Food was supplied to each room in large containers from which the staff in each room could serve the food according to the likes and needs of each child in their care. Children expressed their wishes regarding wanting gravy with their meal, not wanting peas or wanting extra portions and were responded to accordingly. If children were asleep during regular mealtimes their food was kept for them and served to them when they were ready for it.

Dinner on the day of inspection was served at midday and consisted of fish fingers, mushy peas and mashed potato with gravy, served with drinks of water. Drinking water was available to the children in each room throughout the day. Children's drink bottles were kept filled with water and stored on a child height surface from which the children could access them when they wanted a drink.

## 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*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Staff in each room were responsible for checking in and out children from their room. Daily attendance was recorded using an electronic application for that purpose.

(3)(a) Staff in the reception area ensured that no unauthorised persons entered the building or had access to the children.

(b) A written record was maintained of all visitors to the service such as the inspector.

## 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) There were 12 members of staff with current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) First aid boxes were available in each activity room, displayed on an open shelf where they could be easily accessed when required.

(b) First aid boxes were available for use if required by a child attending the service.

## 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 fire fighting 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced annually, most recently in February 2023. The smoke alarms were serviced quarterly, most recently in December 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each room of the service.

## Part VI – Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service was insured to cater for up to 80 children at any one time. Insurance was valid until the end of March 2024.