

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY064
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Name of Service:	Siobhan's Little Swans Childcare
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Address of Service:	Lissenhall, Ballyphilip, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45 NY66
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Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan Egan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary, Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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	N/A
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Description of service

This part time service was established in 2014 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school age care service is also provided.

The service operates Monday to Friday, 8.45am to 1.45pm, for 38 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour session funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for eligible children that operates between 9am and 12pm.

The service is provided from a converted single-storey, detached garage adjacent to a residential premises in a rural area near Lissenhall national school, outside the town of Nenagh in north Tipperary. The children have access to an activity room, sanitary accommodation and outdoor play facilities.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service each day. There is a member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and another member of staff who can be called on to provide relief when required. The residents of the house are present onsite while the service is in operation and can be called on to provide assistance when required.

Staff who work with the children hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister, at levels 5, 6 or 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 the 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), 15(1)(3), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25 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

(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 the three members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

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

(b) A written, validated reference from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of one member of staff.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of each member of staff and relevant documents were kept on file. The service had a system in place to ensure that re-vetting of staff was carried out on a three-yearly basis in line with the requirements of TUSLA.

(d) Police vetting had been carried out in respect of the member of staff who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six consecutive months. Relevant documents were kept on file.

(4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education, or other qualifications deemed equivalent by the Minister, at levels 5, 6 or 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.

(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) The registered provider worked directly with the 10 children aged between 3 and 5 years old who were present in the service on the morning of the inspection, attending the ECCE session. There were 7 children who attended on a part time basis present in the afternoon.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1 to 10 on the morning of the inspection which was within the recommended ratios of 1 to 11.

(4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1 to 10 for the morning session and 1 to 7 for the afternoon session, which was within the requirements of 1 to 11 for the session and 1 to 8 for the part-time service.

(8)(a) A second adult was available on the premises while the service 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.*

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

- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The completed registration forms of the 12 children enrolled in the early years service were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(1) The registration forms contained the information required under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3)(b) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by a member of staff.

(c) The registration forms were available for inspection by an authorised person.

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 bright, comfortable, well laid out and resourced activity room and to play in the outdoors on a daily basis.

The activity room was a rectangular space with openable windows and the entrance door along one wall, which opened directly into an enclosed courtyard, which formed part of the outdoor play area.

An area of the activity room had been fitted with countertops and sinks, one at standard height and another at the children's height, where they could access water for water play and wash their hands.

The room was laid out in a number of interest areas including the home corner, cubby house, sensory area, art area, small world area, table top area and cosy area with library. There was room for the children to move freely around the room to the areas and activities they wished to engage in.

(b) There was a cosy area at the end of the room, furnished with two child sized reclining armchairs. The children could rest and relax there during the day. Sleep mats and bed linen were available if required by a child who wanted to sleep during the day, however, the registered provider said that it was rare for a child to sleep while attending the service.

(3)(a) There were three enclosed outdoor play areas available to the children: The small, enclosed courtyard between the service and the residential house, an enclosed garden with a gravel surface and the playing field with a grass surface. On the day of inspection the courtyard area was used for small world play with a play garage on

padded mats and the garden area was used by the children for riding balance bikes, gyro cars, hoppers, tricycles and the tractor. The children also investigated the fairy village and used shovels to dig the gravel on the raised beds. Some of the children accessed the decking area for imaginative play. The registered provider said that the garden was used throughout the year as the ground surface made it suitable for use in all weathers. The grass area behind was used more when the weather was dry.

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

The service was equipped with furniture, toys, materials and resources, both indoors and outdoors, suitable to the number of children attending the service and their ages and stages of development.

The activity room was set up with child sized tables and chairs along one wall which were used for dining and table-top activities. Child-sized armchairs were available in the cosy area, additional chairs and furniture were available in the cubby house in the corner of the room. Larger chairs were available for use by the staff.

Equipment and materials in the activity room were easily accessible by the children on low level shelves or in furniture designed for use in each interest area such as the kitchen, work bench, sensory table and art area.

Toys and materials for rotation and seasonal use were stored on shelves in the storage area off the activity room.

Outdoor equipment and materials were kept in the storage room beside the premises and in storage units in the outdoor play area. Outdoor furniture and equipment included: folding padded mats to place on the ground to sit and play on, bench seats, ride on toys, hoppers, toy diesel pump, gardening tools and wheelbarrows, fairy houses, balls and manipulative toys brought out from indoors.

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. Children brought food and drinks from home to be consumed in the service during the day at meal and snack times. The children could access their lunchboxes to get something to eat if they were hungry between the regular meal times. Children had access to their water bottles throughout the day. The bottles were refilled with water when empty.

Foods eaten on the day of inspection included: brown bread with butter and jam, crackers, sandwiches, pretzels, yoghurt drinks, scones, yoghurt and fruit (strawberries, grapes, mandarins and apples).

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) The registered provider was responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of the children on the weekly attendance sheet.

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

(b) A written record was maintained of any visitors to the service.

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 responder (FAR) valid until 16 August 2025.

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available on a shelf in the activity room of the service.

(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

The service had current insurance for up to 20 children in attendance at any one time, valid until 27 March 2025.