

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY092
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Name of Service:	Annacarty Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Shannonknock, Annacarty, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E34 PY61
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Morrissey
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	30/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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).

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Description of service

Annacarty Childcare Ltd. is a community based early years service established in 2008 in the village of Annacarty Co Tipperary and provides early years care to 2 to 6 year olds. The service operates from a purpose-built building which consists of a large early years room, an office, a kitchen, sanitary accommodation and a school age care room. Two secure outdoor play areas are available to the children. One is a large green area and the other is a smaller soft fall play area. There is also an outdoor activity room. The service offers full day care Monday to Friday, 07:30 to 18:15, 51 weeks of the year. The service also offers the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) for eligible children, 09:30 to 12:30, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. School age care is also provided.

Staffing

There are currently eight staff working directly in the service including a chef. The person in charge and deputy person in charge do not work with the children daily but are available to provide cover when needed. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. All staff working with children hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at level 5 and above 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

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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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,

Regulation 10 Policies and procedures,

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 19 (1)(a)(b) Health, welfare, and development of the child,

Regulation 22 Food and drink,

Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First aid

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.

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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) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) A person in charge was present on the day of inspection. A review of the staff roster indicated a person in charge was present daily.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that one new staff member had been employed since the previous inspection. A total of one file was reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for five staff members and the registered provider whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for the new staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

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(c) Garda vetting was available on file for everyone working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working with pre-school children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies were assessed for compliance and were deemed to meet the necessary requirements:

- Statement of purpose and function.
- Complaints policy.
- Policy on managing behaviour.
- Policy on authorisation to collect children.
- Policy on healthy eating.
- Risk management policy.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) There were adequate staffing levels to respond to the children's needs on the day of inspection.
- (2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection were above the minimum regulatory requirements. There were 3 staff working directly with 17 children.

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
 - (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)(a) The following observations and discussions with staff reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection.

Basic needs:

The children were met on arrival to the service by a staff member. Children washed their hands on arrival to the service. Staff responded to children kindly, in soft tones of voice and used positive language during the day. The children enjoyed freedom of movement around the main care room on the morning of inspection. The classroom had direct access out on to an enclosed soft fall play area. Outdoor play was promoted and included as part of the daily programme of activities. Staff reported that children played outside daily. There was also an outdoor activity room available to the children. The children's toilets were directly accessible off the main classroom; children were able to access the toilet independently throughout the day. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own level of personal care appropriate to their level of development. There was a rest area available where the children could rest and relax during the day if they felt tired. The service had a healthy eating policy. Children washed their hands prior to mealtimes. Meals were served at appropriate times during the day. At morning snack time children could use plates and cutlery to place their snack on. Children had access to drinking water and were able to get a drink throughout the day.

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Physical and material environment:

The indoor environment was warm, bright and well ventilated. The room was laid out with appropriately sized furniture and a large range of developmentally appropriate equipment and materials which were well organised. Defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play with. These included a well-equipped kitchen and role play area, dolls and buggies, dress up area, book corner with cosy couch, an arts and crafts shelf with a selection of materials, small world toys, puzzles, a construction area and building blocks. Labelled low-level shelving provided children with access to a further selection of activities. Adequate space was available for children to engage in both floor and table play independently and in groups. Children were given the opportunity for messy play. This was observed when the children were playing with rice and water play. There was a range of materials such as spoons, jugs and toys available to use with the messy play. The service had personalised lockers for each child attending the service. There were additional resources for the rotation of materials in the classroom. There was a children's attendance wall which the children marked themselves present in the service as well as a staff roll call. Staff had helped the children create areas of familiarity in the classrooms to promote each child's identity and belonging such as family wall and birthday wall with photos of each child. The family pictures were creatively displayed on the front of the children's scrap books to provide an important link between home and preschool. There was also a community wall and a where we live display in the classroom.

The first outdoor play space was accessed directly from the early years classroom and consisted of a soft fall surface. Children had a range of materials to play with, including a sand pit, ride on toys and tyres. Additional outdoor resources were available as needed. There was an outdoor activity room which also had a range of materials and books available for the children. The second outdoor play space consisted of a large, grassed area, goal posts and climbing tyres.

Programme of Activities

The service offered a child-centred and child-led approach to learning through play and exploration. The children were given freedom of choice, including whether to join in structured activities such as art or circle time. Children helped plan the morning with the staff choosing what activities they would like to do. An interactive pictogram timetable was used in the classroom and displayed at the children's eye level so that they could see what was happening next. When there was a change of activity the children could move the marker on to the next activity. Children were given time reminders as to when an activity was coming to an end and a bell was used to signal the end.

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Supporting Relationships:

Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and a positive regard. They sat with children in small groups or individually, engaged in conversation with and listened attentively to the children as they spoke. The children benefitted from favourable adult to child ratios which enabled each child to receive as much individual attention and support as they needed. The small group size supported the children to get to know each other well and to develop friendships within the group.

(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day, before eating and after using the toilet. There were sinks in the sanitary accommodation areas and in the activity room which gave the children easy access to hand washing facilities and enabled the staff to supervise the children and support good hand-washing practices.

Learning and development were supported through stimulating warm interactions. The staff were observed to be engaged with the children, to sit on the floor or at tables where the children were engaged in activities and to support the children's exploration of their environment and what interested them. A playful atmosphere was observed, with staff engaging actively in games and play with the children. This was observed when staff were playing doctors with the children. The children were using a "blood pressure monitor" and a "statoscope" to check the staff.

Children and staff tidied and cleaned up the classroom area together when there was a change in activity. A comfortable rest area was available in the classroom. The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Children were given the opportunity each morning to try different fruits.

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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 foods eaten by the children during the day were provided by the service except for morning snack which was provided by the parents. The staff were aware of which children had food allergies and intolerances. The service was a nut free zone. Snacks and meals were served at regular intervals during the day. There was a weekly menu display in the corridor. On the day of inspection there was fruit served to all children at 09:30 by the service. At approximately 11:00 morning snack which was provided by parents was eaten. Foods eaten at snack time included: crackers, sandwiches, bagels, brown bread, cheese, berries, fromage frais and fruit. A hot meal was provided to the full day care children at 12:30. This meal on the day of inspection was fish cakes and rice. Full day care children also received another hot meal with the after-school children at approximately 15:00. The afternoon hot meal on the day of inspection was chicken al a king. There was a variety of foods served throughout the week such as bacon, turkey, fish, mashed potatoes, rice and vegetables. Breakfasts were also provided to children who arrived early to the service, which included a variety of cereals, milk and toast. At 17:00 children were offered toast and a selection of fruits. Children brought their own drink bottles which were stored on a shelf in their room, where they could be accessed when they wanted them. Bottles were refilled with water as required. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge in the service. Staff sat with the children during snack time to supervise them, encourage conversation and to help if needed, for example with opening lunch boxes. Within the classroom there was a child friendly food pyramid displayed along with names and pictures of fruits.

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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 staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.