

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY095
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Name of Service:	Cahir Park Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ardfinnan Road, Cahir, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E21 R966
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jim Halpin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Place Mallow Cork P51DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher
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

This community service is located on the second floor of Cahir Athletic Football Club's clubhouse in Cahir town. The service offers a sessional service with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme in the morning from 08:50 to 11:50 and the afternoon from 12:10 to 15:10 and cares for children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates 38 weeks of the year. The service consists of one care room with a second adjacent room for messy play. The service has access to a large outdoor play area within the soccer grounds and can access a woodland park also. A sensory room has also been developed in a building off the outdoor play area.

Staffing

There are seven adults employed in the service including the registered provider. Four adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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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 children, registered provider, person in charge and staff 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.*

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(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 service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and there was a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that both the person in charge and the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to seven adults, who were employed in the service including the registered provider were the subject of inspection.
- (a) Of the 14 required references, 6 were from a previous employer with the required record of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 14 required references, 8 were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained and were on file for each of the seven adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was required and available for three of the seven adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) There was evidence that six adults who required childcare qualifications held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The seventh adult was not working directly with the children and did not require a qualification.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1) At the time of inspection, there were the adequate number of adults required, responsible for the direct care and supervision of the children in attendance at all times.

(3) The service exceeded the minimum ratio required as per regulation in the care room. The 20 children attending the service were supervised directly by 4 adults.

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

Basic needs:

- Snacks were provided by the parents and were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples of snacks were rolls, yogurts, crackers, rice cakes, fruit and sandwiches.
- Drinks were accessible to the children throughout the morning.
- The children were observed to access the sanitary area independently with the staff available to assist if required.

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- Outdoor play was promoted and while outdoors, the children were noted to be dressed appropriately for the weather with sun hats.
- A designated cosy area was available in the care room, where the children could relax and opt out of scheduled activities, as necessary.
- The layout of the care room supported the children to move freely within their environment and to engage in their chosen tasks.
- A spare set of clothing for each child was observed to be stored in a cloth bag on hooks and was available in the event of a child requiring changing.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection. The children were encouraged and praised during tasks in a warm and caring manner for example when children played with diggers, building blocks, completed artwork and played imaginative games.
- Staff engaged with the children in both group and individual activities. A staff member was observed assisting in a soccer game with the children and then listening to their conversations in relation to teams they supported. Strategies were used to extend their thinking and learning such as open-ended questions. The children were observed to partake in watering plants, colouring pictures and riding balance bikes as part of the wibbly wobbly bike scheme. Throughout the morning staff were observed getting down to their level while discussing and questioning their chosen task.
- Children remained outdoors for the day and appeared very comfortable and settled in the learning environment, making decisions about what and who they played with. The children appeared familiar with the routine of the day as they transitioned from one activity to the next. This was observed in the transition from outdoor play to lunch time, as children tidied up, washed their hands and obtained their lunch boxes and drinks.
- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed outdoors at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- In conversation, the person in charge stated that the service communicated with parents and guardians by phone, text message or face to face at drop off or collection and met with parents at the beginning and end of each school year. Meetings were also facilitated outside of this time if required.

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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 entrance door was secured appropriately. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- The windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed in the indoor and outdoor area were in good condition.
- The large outdoor area was enclosed in metal fencing. It was observed to be a safe and secure space for the children, with a metal gate to exit.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes observed to be accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Handwashing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels.
- Children were observed to wash their hands before snack and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Outing:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that outings to the woodland park area had been conducted this year and the service has one outing yearly off site with a risk assessment completed prior to this occurring. On reviewing the risk assessments for an outing to the woodland park area and one offsite outing from last year, a number of strategies were in place to mitigate identified risks to the children.

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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-

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

Compliance Information

(1) Records confirmed that each child was checked in on arrival at the service and checked out on departure by the registered provider.

(3)

(b) A visitors record book was used to record all persons entering the premises. The inspector signed in on arrival and out on departure of 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted to be 16 April 2026.

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(b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment certificate was dated 21 April 2026, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 16 October 2025.

(2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

(4) The fire procedures were displayed on the notice board outside the care room.