

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY099		
Name of Service:	Clonea / Rathgormack Community Playgroup		
Address of Service:	C/O Clonea Power N.S, Clonea Power, Co Waterford		
Eircode:	E32NP40		
Name of Registered Provider:	Niamh Swan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	26/11/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square 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).			
Conditions if applicable	N/A		

Description of service

The early years sessional service is located in Clonea National School and caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. The children attending the service are currently aged 3 years to 5 years. The service operated from 9:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday 38 weeks of the year and has use of one large care room and sanitary facilities. The outdoor play area is in an enclosed space on the school grounds and the children also have the use of the tarmac yard in the school. The service has a school age service.

Staffing

There were five staff attached to the service and a total of four staff were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider is not service based.

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 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, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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 service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
- (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to five adults, four of whom were employed in the service and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.
- (a) Of the 10 required references, 5 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 10 required references, 5 were from a source other than a past employer with required records of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were obtained and were on file for the five adults. The service also 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 one of the five adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) The four adults who worked directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. The registered provider did not hold a qualification.

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 19 children attending the service were supervised directly by 4 adults.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i) Twenty three early years children were enrolled at the service, and a sample of 11 records were reviewed. Each of the children's records were found to contain the required information in (a) to (i) above.

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

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of relevant documents.

Basic needs:

- The layout of the care room supported the children to move freely within their environment and to actively engage in their chosen tasks.
- Food was prepared by the parents or guardians and was observed to be healthy and nutritious in the service.
- Drinking water was readily available to the children and staff were observed to sit at the tables during snack time, interacting with the children and providing assistance when needed to open food items.
- Children were observed accessing the toilet under the supervision of the staff who were available to assist if needed.
- Children who wished to rest while they attended the service could avail of a seated area in the room by the window.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. An example of this was children put on their own coats and handed out snacks.

Supporting relationships:

- During mealtimes, the children were afforded sufficient time to enjoy the food in a relaxed atmosphere and adults conversed with children at the tables.
- The inspector observed positive and playful interactions between the staff and children. For example, the staff sat on the floor or at the table at the children's level and were building blocks, completing artwork and engaging in imaginative play with the children. During activities staff were heard praising children's efforts and giving encouragement in relation to each child's chosen activity.
- Family photos were displayed on the walls indoors. This promoted a sense of belonging.
- The children were encouraged to tidy up after snack time and play, which promoted a sense of responsibility.
- Various methods of communication were stated as being in use to communicate and exchange information with parents and guardians. Staff stated in conversation that they speak with parents/guardians at drop off and collection times and that they send group and individual messages and emails as needed. They also offer a meeting to parents and guardians after three months of their child being in the playschool to discuss their progress and needs.
- A key person approach was displayed on the wall and the person in charge informed the inspector that staff carry out observations of the children and discuss any issues and accomplishments with the person in charge and parents.
- Transitions were announced by giving 10 minutes notice, making the children aware that one activity was coming to an end and another was beginning, helping to create a more predictable environment for the children.

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:

- On the day of inspection, the door was appropriately secured on arrival to the premises and entry was gained by the use of a doorbell. This restricted unauthorised access into the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.
- During the inspection, toys and play equipment assessed were observed to be in good condition.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children on inspection.
- The outdoor area was observed to be secured with timber fencing and a gate. Children also had access to a tarmac play area in the national school yard.
- The windows in the care room were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children.

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 meals and after using the sanitary facilities.
- Children's coats and bags were stored off the ground on hooks.
- A refrigerator was available in the care room for the storage of perishable foods.
- Lidded, foot pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste during the inspection.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- The fire extinguisher was secured to the wall.

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)
Up to date records of First Aid Response (FAR) certification were in place for two of the adults working in the service.
- (2)
(a) There was one sufficiently stocked first aid box available in the service, which was safely stored out of reach of children.
(b) The first aid supplies were always accessible, should they be required.

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 as 17 October 2025.

(b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated 26 September 2025, and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 27 August 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 wall at the side of the fire door.