

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY104
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Drangan Cloneen Community Playgroup
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Community Centre, Drangan, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 XA43
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Gwen Lawson
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	24/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Tipperary.
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<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E Cullen
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<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector
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### 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

The service was established in 1995 and offers a sessional programme five days per week over 38 weeks per year. The service is registered to offer morning and afternoon sessions, 9:00am to 12:00pm and 12:15pm to 3:15pm. Located in the rural village of Drangan, Co. Tipperary, the service operates from a space in a community hall, with their own sanitary accommodation and access to an outdoor play onsite.

### Staffing

The service currently employs three staff members who work directly with children. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. On the day of inspection, a volunteer was also present. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Level 5 and 6 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 child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9 (1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment, 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service, 11 (1)(2) – Staffing levels, 15 - Record of pre-

school child, 19 - Health, welfare and development of child, 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child, 25 - First Aid and 28 – Insurance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 10 – Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service and 15 - Record of pre-school child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the early years classroom.

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

(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)(b)(c) The deputy designated person was in charge on the day of inspection. An organisational chart provided details of the management and reporting structures within the service.

(2) Documentation was reviewed for the three staff members employed by the service and a volunteer.

(a)(b) Two validated references were available for each staff member and the volunteer from either a past employer, or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member and volunteer.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member who had lived outside the state for a period over 6 months.

(4) Certificates of qualification were available on file demonstrating that staff members held a qualification at the minimum 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

There were written policies, procedures and statements, as specified in Schedule 5, available for the service. The policies reviewed for this inspection were the following: policy on settling in, policy on infection control and the policy on authorisation to collect. These policies and procedures were recently updated, appropriate and specific to the setting.

## 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) On the day of inspection there were adequate numbers of staff working directly with the children.

(3) The staff to child ratios were maintained above the minimum requirements. There were 15 children aged 3 to 6 years being cared for by 3 staff.

### 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)

Prior to a child commencing in the service, all parents and/or guardians were issued with a child registration form. This registration form contained all of the required information for parents and/or guardians to complete. A sample of fifteen child registration forms were reviewed on the day of inspection, and all were completed in full with appropriate declarations signed by parents and/or guardians.

## 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

(1)(a)

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. During a whole group activity children were supported to make decisions about their own learning and could opt to engage in an activity of their choosing. During the morning children were observed to engage in self-directed play and learning, with staff members available to facilitate and extend learning as required. Children demonstrated confidence and independence skills throughout the morning.

The children were engaged in a learning project on the Gruffalo storybooks, linked activities included reading of the books, puppet play, completing a large visual display and craft activities. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through the display of these works of art and others, the display of photographs of recent activities such as outdoor play and a dinosaur theme.

Parent and guardian communication during collection and drop off periods, provided an opportunity for staff to share information with parents. Additional methods of communication such as phone calls and use of the service group media messaging application.

The indoor environment was a spacious classroom, well-lit and laid out. Low-level open shelving units were used to create areas of interest. Children could freely access materials and resources from the labelled shelves, promoting independence and choice making. A range of play-based materials were offered in the home corner, small world play, construction, and craft areas of the room. Two partially enclosed wooden playhouses used as part of the library area, provided children with the opportunity to relax with a book away from the busy classroom space.

A dedicated low-level storage unit with individual storage for each child was used to store items important to each child such as crafts and personal belongings. Children were observed to place items in their dedicated storage area during the morning and gather their possessions prior to departing for home, supporting independence and responsibility. The top of this unit was also used as a drinks station for each child's drinks beaker.

### 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:

There was a secure entry and exit system in place on the main entrance door of the building to prevent unauthorised persons gaining entry or children exiting unsupervised. As the classroom was in a shared use building, all internal doors were secured while the service was in operation, keys were easily accessible to staff members. The kitchen and staff areas were inaccessible to children. All cleaning agents were stored safely and out of reach of children. All blind cords were securely mounted out of reach of children. Hinge guard protectors were in place on all doors to reduce the risk of injury to children.

##### Infection Control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. Children were observed washing their hands before eating and after toileting. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand washing.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Infection Control:

A carpet mat was in use in the sink area of the children's sanitary accommodation, posing a potential risk of cross infection as effective cleaning could not be completed.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Infection Control:

The service has installed a non-slip washable mat, and the service will only use a washable mat going forward.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### Infection Control:

Photograph of new mat.

### Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

## 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) All staff members held recognised first aid responder certification and were available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box clearly labelled in the store/office space, which was available for the use of the children attending the early years service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service demonstrated insurance cover for a sessional service for 22 children. The insurance policy commenced 28 March 2023 and will expire 27 March 2024.