

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY104
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Name of Service:	Drangan Cloneen Community Playgroup
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Address of Service:	Community Centre, Drangan, Thurles, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 XA43
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gwen Lawson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	N/A
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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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

This service was established in 1995 and offers a sessional programme 5 days per week over 38 weeks per year. The service is registered to offer a morning and afternoon session but is currently only running a morning session from 09:00 to 12:00, Monday to Friday. Located in the village of Drangan, Co Tipperary, the service operates from a designated pre-school room in a community hall, with their own sanitary accommodation and access to a secure outdoor play area and the community hall.

Staffing

The service currently employs four staff members who work directly with children. The registered provider does not work directly with children in the service. Staff members held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care 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

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 11(1)(3) Staffing levels

Regulation 20 (1)(a)(b) Facilities for rest and play

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 22 Food and drink

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child

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

Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b)(4) Fire safety

Regulation 28 Insurance

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*

(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-

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (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 person in charge was present daily. This was determined from review of the staff roster.
The staff files for four staff, and the registered provider were reviewed on the day.
- (2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each person working at the service.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff members and the registered provider. In the case of one staff member, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) There were enough adults to respond to children's individual needs. There were 4 staff directly working with 16 children.
- (3) The person in charge ensured that the adult to children ratio was maintained. The service exceeded the minimum child to adult ratio required under the regulation.

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 19 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.*

Compliance Information

- 1(a) The service consisted of one large playroom which was very well equipped with a range of toys, materials and furniture suitable to the stage of development of the children. The children's arts and crafts decorated the walls of the service. The service was decorated with Easter and Spring crafts belonging to the children and the life cycle of the caterpillar. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as Montessori work, puzzles and eating at snack time. A large hall was also available to the children with a selection of ride on toys. The playroom had several defined interest areas which were appropriately resourced, including a kitchen and cooking corner, construction area, art and craft materials, a dolls house, small world materials, a farming area, magnetic building

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

blocks and dress up. On the morning of inspection, the children also had the option of part taking in arts and crafts, playing in the hall or playing with modelling clay. There were additional resources for the rotation of materials in the main playroom. There was plenty space available to allow the children the opportunity to play. The outdoor area was fully enclosed and had a covered area. The children had a variety of toys and equipment outside including ride on toys, a playhouse, sand, water play and building blocks.

(b) There was a cosy/rest area available in the playroom for the children.

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. All foods eaten by the children were supplied by their parents. The drinks station was available to the children and could be accessed by the children when they wanted a drink. Bottles were refilled with water as required. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge in the service. Staff supervised children while they were eating and helped them if needed, for example with opening lunch boxes. Foods eaten at snack time on morning of the inspection included: cheese, brown bread, yogurts, apples, berries, bananas, rice cakes and sandwiches.

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 premises was adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised and unauthorised persons gaining access as the main door to the service had to be opened by staff. The outdoor area was secure to prevent children leaving. Cleaning agents and hazardous materials were stored inaccessible to children. Radiator covers were present to prevent injury to children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Infection control:

The service was clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules maintained daily by staff. There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand drying throughout the service. There were designated children's toilets available to the children. Designated staff toilets were also provided. Handwashing reminders and steps were present in the sanitary accommodation. Children were supported to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before snack times. Pedal bins were in operation to avoid cross contamination. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge. Tables were cleaned by staff before snack time.

Administration of medication:

The service had a medication policy. Consent was obtained from parents for administering medication. Individual care plans were in place for children who required administration of medication. Medication was stored out of reach of the children.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.
There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within the service.
Firefighting equipment was present in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

Garda vetting disclosures for one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

Garda vetting for the expired staff member was applied for and received.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Copy of new Garda vetting for the expired staff member was sent to the Early Years inspectorate.

Summary Comment

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

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.

(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) There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 20th of March 2026 and staff advised that monthly fire drills were completed.

(b) There was a record available demonstrating that the smoke alarm system was last serviced on the 11th of February 2026 and the firefighting equipment was last serviced on the same date.

(4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire displayed in a conspicuous position on the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.