

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY144
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Name of Service:	Spafield FRC
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Address of Service:	Spafield Crescent, Old Road, Cashel, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E25 CX31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Julie White
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
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Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara & Lisa McGeeney
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Spafield FRC is a community early years service and provides a full day care and ECCE sessional programme to the children aged 2 to 6 years. A school aged childcare service is also provided for children aged 4 to 15 years. The service is in the town of Cashel and operates from a purpose-built premises within the grounds of the family resource centre. It consists of three early years rooms, sanitary accommodation, and staff areas. Outdoor play areas are available onsite.

Staffing

There are currently 15 staff employed in the service; this includes the manager who does not work directly with children. The manager is the designated person in charge. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. Staff working directly with children held qualifications in Early Childhood Education and Care at Levels 5, 6 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of the child,
Regulation 22 Food and drink
Regulation 25 First aid, and
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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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-

- (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 registered provider had assigned a manager to oversee the operation of the childcare facility.

(b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the inspection process. The registered provider arrived during the morning.

(2) Recruitment records in respect of the 15 adults working in the service were reviewed and the following information was obtained:

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for 15 staff working at the service.

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

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

(4) The adults employed to work directly with children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education and copies of the corresponding certificates were available.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) While out of state police vetting was available for one staff member, police vetting was not available for one other staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting was applied for by the service. Police vetting was returned to the service on the 4th March 2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the police vetting was sent to the Early Years Inspector.

Summary Comment

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

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were enough adults to respond to children's individual needs.

There were 9 staff directly working with 41 children.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, the staff to child ratios were maintained as follows throughout the service:

In the pre-school Ladybird room, there were 15 children being cared for by 3 staff.

In the pre-school Butterfly room, there were 14 children being cared for by 4 staff.

In the toddler Bumble Bee room, there were 8 children being cared for by 2 staff.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(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 was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, review of records and discussions with staff:

Basic needs:

The children enjoyed freedom of movement both indoors, in their rooms, and outdoors in one of the outdoor play areas. There was also a sensory room that was available to all of the children and used by individual children or small groups of children as required.

There were cosy areas in each room where the children could rest and relax during the day. These spaces were furnished with floor rugs or padded vinyl mats and child sized vinyl covered sofas. Camp beds were available if a child required a sleep during the day, however, the staff said that none of the children currently attending the service routinely had a sleep during the day.

The children were supported and encouraged to be independent with self-care skills such as washing their hands, using the toilet, dressing for the outdoors, caring for their belongings, opening, and closing their lunch boxes and drink bottles and tidying up after play. Staff supervised these activities and assisted the children as necessary or showed them how to do something. For example, the children in the Ladybirds room had been shown how to put on their coats using the up and over method.

Toilets and nappy changing areas were directly accessible from each activity room which supported the children to use the toilets independently when they needed to. Nappy changing was conducted at regular times throughout the day and when required.

Children brought meals and snacks from home which they could eat at mealtimes or when hungry. Drinking water was available to the children throughout the day.

Supporting relationships:

The children were cared for by the same team of staff each day in favourable adult to child ratios which enabled the staff to give each child as much individual attention as they needed.

Staff were observed to be understanding of the children in their care, to respond quickly and sensitively to their needs and to speak to them with kindness and encouragement.

The staff sat with the children, at the tables, on the floor or in the cosy/reading areas, observing their play and exploration, assisting the children as required, engaging them in conversation and being available to them.

Staff met with the children's parents at arrival and departure times when they could share information about their child. The service used an electronic application designed for use in early years services to take photos of the children and record their daily activities, which could then be viewed by the parents when they logged into the app.

A special activity recently took place in the Ladybirds room, where parents were invited to visit the service and prepare a meal or food from their culture, which the children could then taste. The staff said that this had been a popular event with staff, children, and parents.

Physical and material environment:

There were three main activity rooms in the service, each designated to a different age group of children: The Bumble Bees room for 2 – 3-year-olds, the Butterflies room for 3 – 4-year-olds and the Ladybirds room for 4 – 5-year-olds. There was also a sensory room off Ladybirds room which could be used by all of the children.

The rooms were well resourced with toys, materials, and furniture suitable to the age and stage of development of the children who used the room. Bumble Bees and Butterflies rooms each consisted of two interconnected spaces, with each space set up with different play experiences.

Areas of interest in each room included a cosy area or quiet zone, home corner, art area, puzzles and manipulative play materials area, construction area and sensory play area.

The sensory room was equipped with a massage chair, various light and sounds making resources, textured materials, a music making stand, rockers and bouncing equipment.

The children enjoyed freedom of choice of activities in each room. On the morning of the inspection, the staff in each room had set up several special interest areas that the children could choose to engage with, alternatively they were free to explore in the other interest areas. Special interest areas on the morning of the inspection included sensory play with coloured rice and pasta in the lipped tables in Ladybirds room, planting watercress or

engaging with the home-made play dough in Butterflies room and building a train track or engaging with stickle bricks in Bumble Bees room. Staff were engaged in the children’s play and exploration and provided them with the resources they needed to extend and enrich the play experience.

The children’s artwork was displayed on the walls of the service.

The noticeboards in each room displayed the short, medium, and long terms plans for that room.

Pictograms timetables were used in each room and displayed at the children’s eye level so that they could see what was happening next.

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 service manager and staff said that they actively promoted healthy eating in the service and regularly sent reminders to parents to support them to make healthy food choices for their children. This was evidenced on the day of inspection by reviewing past messages regarding healthy eating and by the posters and signs displayed in the entrance lobby showing pictures of suggested healthy lunchboxes.

Children brought their own drink bottles which were stored on a shelf in their rooms or in the fridge, where the children could access them when they wanted them. Bottles were refilled with water as required.

Foods eaten at snack time on morning of the inspection included: crackers, sandwiches, fromage frais and fruit.

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 responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service. There were also 11 staff members trained in paediatric first aid employed in 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 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date certificate was in place to demonstrate that the service was insured to provide full day care for the number of children the service is registered to accommodate.