

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC032
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Name of Service:	Karen's Playschool
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Address of Service:	Unit 5C, Glanmire Industrial Estate, Glanmire, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T45 N225
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Crowley
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	26/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork. T23x440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
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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Description of service

Karen's Playschool first notified in 2016. It initially operated as a sessional service but now provides part time care, for children aged two to six years. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated from 9.00am to 12.00pm, each Monday to Friday, over 38 weeks of the year. The service is open from 9.00am to 1.00pm daily. The premises is situated in an industrial estate, in an urban area of Glanmire in Cork and is provided from the ground floor of a two-storey building. It consists of one care room, which has adjoining sanitary facilities and also includes a kitchen, an office, and a storage area. The children have the use of a designated outdoor play space.

Staffing

There are four staff attached to the service. This includes the registered provider who works on site, directly with the children.

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 facilities. 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 registered provider, 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) The registered provider has ensured that there is a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge as well as the deputy person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.
 - (c) There is a clear management structure in the service. The parents notice board details each staff member along with their photograph, title, roles and responsibilities.
2. There were four staff attached to the service and four staff files were assessed.
 - (a) Six of the eight references were available from a past employer and had been validated.
 - (b) Two of the eight references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all for staff. However, 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) Police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
4. All the staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

1. There were four staff available to work directly with the children at all times on the day of inspection.
2. On the morning of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations. There were four adults available to work directly with the 14 children in attendance aged between 2.5 years and 4.9 years. During the part time session there were three adults available to work directly with their six children present.
8. The registered provider has ensured that a minimum of two adults were on the premises at all times. A review of the staff roster demonstrated that at least two staff members were present at all times throughout the day.

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.*

- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

1. On the day of inspection, a sample of 10 children's registration forms were inspected. These forms were chosen at random and all 10 contained the information required above from (a) to (i)
3. (c) There were a total of 22 registration forms available for review by an authorised person on the day of inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

1. The registered provider has ensured that a record in writing is kept in relation to:
 - (j) Administration of medicine: there were 11 records of medicines being administered. There was evidence of these records being signed by the parent.
 - (k) Accidents and incidents: there were three records of accidents since January 2025, these were inspected and found to contain evidence of parental signature.
3. These records were retained on the premises and were open to available to the inspector.

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:

- Children's water bottles were placed on a low-level table and were always freely accessible to children throughout the day.
- There was a changing table available for children not yet toilet trained.
- There were low level mirrors around the care room so that children may attend to their own personal care.
- The room was laid out in a way that it allowed children easy access to all play materials and bathrooms.
- There were two quiet areas available to any child who may like to have some quiet time throughout the day. These were equipped with soft furnishings, mats and books.
- There were low level stackable beds available to any child who may need to sleep during the day.
- There was evidence of individual care plans for children who require these.
- The inspector observed children who became upset and sought out their key worker who in turn comforted them and supported them until they were ready to return to the group.

Supporting Relationships:

- A strong ethos of teamwork is evident in the setting, staff reported informal supervision and staff meetings are held weekly after the children have left.
- It was observed that the staff work in partnership with parents. There was a communication book at the entrance where staff and parents keep a note of anything of importance to the child's day. The staff were able to keep a detailed log of children's needs and details were shared with the parents daily.
- The service has a messaging app that they use to communicate with parents by phone.
- A family wall is prominently displayed in the care room. This features all the children and their families along with the staff. This aids the children in their sense of well-being and belonging.

Programme of Activities:

- The service operated from a play based pedagogical approach.
- Children were observed to opt in and out of tabletop activities. Staff were observed to sit with children and encourage participation, but children were afforded the choice of choosing their own play materials.
- Children's learning was documented in learning journals and shared with parents.
- The care room appeared to be a language rich environment. There were multiple books, mark making equipment, and written words displayed prominently throughout the service. Staff were observed to encourage children to partake in activities in a positive manner.

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 main entrance was secured to prevent unauthorised entry to or exit from the premises.
- There was adequate lighting to ensure clear sight of all areas of the room.
- All cleaning materials were stored on high shelves out of reach of children.
- Sharp instruments such as scissors were secured on high shelves.
- Children's bags and coats were stored safely to prevent slips, trips and falls.
- Children's perishable food was stored in the refrigerator.
- All electrical cables were out of reach of children.

- The pull cord in the sanitary accommodation was secured safely.

Infection Control:

- It was noted that the children's hands were washed regularly throughout the day.
- The wash hand basins throughout the premises were provided with thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels. The water temperature was recorded at 28.7°C in one bathroom and at 38.7°C in another bathroom during the inspection.
- Pedal operated bins were available throughout the premises for the safe disposal of used tissues and paper towels.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff reported that none of the children needed medicine on an ongoing basis, however staff reported that they were aware of the procedure in relation to the administration of medicine.
- Evidence was available that records of administration of medicines were shared with and signed by parents.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were unobstructed.
- All firefighting equipment was easily accessible to adults.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for four members of staff. However, three of these vetting disclosures were 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:

The registered provider has now applied for Garda vetting for all three staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence of updated garda vetting for two staff members has been sent to the inspector and evidence of an application for the third staff member has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

Evidence of an application for one staff members' Garda vetting was reviewed however, a copy of the complete Garda vetting has not been submitted to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to Regulation 23 remains outstanding.

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. The registered provider has ensured that there was person trained in first aid at all times available to the children. Through the inspection of staff records, it was noted that there were two adults with First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
2. (a) (b) There was a fully equipped first aid box in the care room which was stored safely out of reach of children but easily accessible to staff.