

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LK009
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Name of Service:	Sunshine Preschool & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	St Senans National School Foynes Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 XHT9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Monika Culhane
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	1 st May 2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	4
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate 2nd floor Estuary House Henry Street Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	J Ryan
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

This is a registered full day care, parttime and sessional service and provides care and education for children aged 2 years – 6 years, operating Monday – Friday, 08:00hours – 17:00 hours, for 38 weeks of the year. It also operates a breakfast club and a school age service. The service operates from a designated playroom in the national school. It has sanitary facilities for the children and adults and has its own enclosed outdoor play area at the back of the premises. Children have daily access to the school yard and the local playing pitch.

Staffing

There are six staff employed in the service, and five staff have childcare qualifications. The registered provider is the manager of the service and works on site every day.

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 9,11,15,19,24,25,26 and 28.

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*

(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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge were available on the premises on the day of inspection.

(2) There were six staff employed in the service, with three staff working directly with the pre-school children in the service on the day. Six staff files were checked on the day of the inspection.

The person in charge had ensured that each employee working in the service was suitable and competent, as the following documents were available on file for all staff members.

(a) References from the person's past employers and in particular the most recent employer.

(b) References from sources other than past employers in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Vetting disclosures were received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of all staff. All Garda Vetting documentation were dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice EYI-RN12.3 renewal of Garda vetting published by the Inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 01 January 2024.

(d) International police vetting was available for a staff member who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) All staff working directly with the pre-school children had childcare qualifications ranging from level 5 to level 7 on the national qualifications framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) There were 15 pre-school children aged 2 – 5 years being supervised by 3 adults for the morning session. The adult/child ratio on the day of the inspection met with the minimum adult to child ratio requirements of 1:11. There were four children who attended the full day care service and who were supervised by two 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

A sample of five records for pre-school children was examined, and all the required information detailed below was contained on each record.

- (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.

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) BASIC NEEDS:

The children brought their own packed lunches in line with the healthy eating policy of the service. Food observed on the day of the inspection included: sandwiches, a selection of fruit, and drinks of water. Children sat together around the picnic tables outdoors and were given as much time as they needed to eat their food. Children were allowed to eat their snacks at any time if they were hungry. Bread and toast were available, and there was a supply of bottled water available in the fridge. Menu plans were available for the children who attended full time and dinners were sourced locally each day.

The children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap. Children were encouraged to use a tissue to clean their noses if required. Children toileted independently, with assistance given to those who needed it. The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the pre-school room. There was a plentiful supply of play props available to support sensorial play. The indoor environment had a range of developmentally appropriate and challenging experiences such as a construction corner, sand box, reading/relaxing area, home and family corner, dress up area, creativity area, dining table, games table, art easel, mark making area, music corner and a box of leaves/twigs. The children were supported and encouraged to behave appropriately for their age and stage of development through having simple rules to follow and a good level of choice of activities. Minor disputes between children were resolved in a kind and caring manner. Children were supported to problem solve and share toys.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

Staff were observed to be kind and caring in all her interactions with the children. Each child was treated as an individual and had their likes, abilities, and natural tendencies understood and respected. When the children arrived to the service, they were given the choice of playing indoors or outdoors, and whichever they chose, their choice was respected.

Children played outdoors in the large play area at the rear of the facility, where they had access to messy play such as sand and bark. Wellingtons and wet gear were available in the event of poor weather conditions. Children were observed to enjoy time spent on the ride on bikes in the yard. There were potted plants in the play area which supported conversations with the children around the natural environment.

An adult sized couch and adult armchair was provided in the service which facilitated adults and children sitting together and interacting with each other. Sleep beds were available for the children who attended full time if they required a sleep.

Staff were observed to be interested in the children, listened to them and spoke to them using a soft tone of voice and positive language, engaging them in conversation and giving each child the opportunity to express themselves. Children were observed to lead their own play and choose different play activities.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) Each pre-school child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by the registered provider.

This record was available on the attendance register.

(3)(a) The registered provider ensured that no person other than the following was allowed to enter the service.

(i) Pre-school child attending the service.

(ii) A person dropping or collecting such a child.

(iii) An employee.

(iv) An unpaid worker could not enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee.

(b) A record in writing was kept of persons who entered the service on the visitors logbook, and the inspector signed in and out of the service on the day.

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) Staff held current certification in first aid for children.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the playroom.

(b)The first aid box was available at all times if required by a child.

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 firefighting 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) The fire drills were practiced monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 30 April 2025.

(b)The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently on 16 September 2024 and a record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises which were serviced on 20 June 2024.

(4)A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended.