

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016WH005
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Name of Service:	Glasson Pre School
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Address of Service:	Glasson, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 CX61
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Irwin, Lorraine Nolan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	11/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	16
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath.
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. O' Connor Hughes
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Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

This Early Years' Service provides a part time service operated by private providers. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service's opening hours are from 09:00 to 14:00. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. A school age childcare facility is available.

The service is located in an adapted domestic dwelling in Glasson, Athlone, Co. Westmeath consisting of two pre-school rooms and a kitchen. A third pre-school room is located to the rear of the premises. An outdoor play area is available for children. A one-way traffic system is in place for the drop off and collection of children.

Staffing

Seven adults were present on the 8 November 2024 working directly with the children. One of the registered providers was present for the inspection and attended the closing meeting. The second registered provider was not present for the inspection.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance in the Room 2 (3 to 5years) under:

- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 27 Supervision

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

One of the registered providers was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

Evidence of a clear management structure was displayed in the hallway of the service.

Ten staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Of the ten files reviewed two written validated references were available in respect of seven staff members and the registered providers.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the staff members and the registered providers.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for a staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A)

One employee present was working directly with children under the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were not available in respect of three new staff members.

(3)

Completed vetting procedures were not put in place prior to the employment of new staff in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

With regards to the two written validated references, all 4 new staff members has two but one is not on headed paper so just one waiting to receive it on headed paper.

Management will ensure that all paperwork is completed fully before a new employee starts in the service, by using a check list system and also use the reference checklist book.

(3)

Management will get vetting in place before any new employee's starts in the service and use a check list system to ensure everything is in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated references submitted.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector addressed the non-compliance.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(8)(a) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—

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)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were forty-six children attending the service supervised directly by seven adults.

(4)(a)(b)

An adequate number of adults supervised children attending on a sessional and part time on the day of the inspection.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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)
In a review of twelve child enrolment records information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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:

(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;

(b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;

(c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;

(d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;

(e) the facilities available;

(f) the opening hours and fees;

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

A parent booklet was available for review with information in respect of 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

A copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations was available.

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)

Room 2

Children enjoyed the various play experiences that included free play activities, sensory, imaginative and creative play in the indoor and outdoor environments supported by staff members.

A little helper system was observed as children choose who to sit with for their lunch. A rolling snack was in operation and children choose to eat their snack when they were hungry. Plates were used to place healthy snacks on which included crackers, rolls, sandwiches and fruit with water to drink. Children sat at tables and enjoyed conversations and interactions with their peers.

Positive communications and interactions were observed between staff and children "during news of the day" as each child got the opportunity to express themselves. Staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Access and inclusion plans were available for review. Children requiring extra supervision and assistance were supported by staff in a positive caring manner.

The physical and material environment provided opportunities for developmentally appropriate play experiences to meet the learning needs of the children. Children's artwork and photographs were displayed.

Partnership with parents was noted through a verbal handover at collection time, child development observations were shared and signed by parents, one to one meeting, though a private social media outlet and the children's play and work folder is sent home to parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The service had invited people from the local community to attend the service and speak to the children that included the ambulance service, the Gardai and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corner.

(b)

Rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to relax. Low level beds were available for children to rest or sleep if required.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure located to the rear of the service. A variety of toys and play equipment was available for use by the children. Interest areas included wooden huts depicting a shop, doctor and Gardaí. A grassed area that included a mud kitchen and play slides was available to children.

Children were observed cycling on scooters, tricycles and bicycles on the tarmac surface.

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 door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agent in Room 2.

Infection Control:

All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks, after using the toilet and outdoor play.

Warm running water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 31.2 degrees Celsius.

The pre-school room and sanitary accommodation were ventilated by openable windows.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods in the pre-school room. A record of fridge temperatures was available and indicated that correct temperatures were maintained at less than 5 degrees Celsius.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was given at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely in the service and available if a child presented with a high temperature. Medication records reviewed indicated that medicine was administered correctly in the service.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from Room 2 in the service. A fire assembly point was located to the back of the building in the outdoor play area.

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.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)

Three adults held a First Aid response qualification (FAR) and were available in the service during the hours of operation. Three adults held a paediatric first aid qualification.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was located in the pre-school rooms in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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)

A written record of fire drills was available. The last recorded fire drill carried out in the service was dated 27 September 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and the firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced on the 13 June 2024 and the 2 September 2024 respectively.

(2)

The record was open to inspection by (a)(b)(c).

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised by adults in the indoor and outdoor environments and when using the toilet in room 2 during the inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The service furnished the necessary information required for the inspection.