

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017RN501		
Name of Service:	Willow Outdoor Preschool		
Address of Service:	Antogher Road, Roscommon, Co. Roscommon		
Eircode:	F42 V292		
Name of Registered Provider:	Katie Glynn		
Service type:	Part Time		
Date(s) of Inspection:	07/01/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM 21
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, Convent Road, Roscommon. Co Roscommon.		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Kennedy		
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.		

Description of service

This privately operated outdoor early learning and care service is located in the town of Roscommon. The service offers a part time care provision from 9.00hrs to 13.50hrs. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programmes and sessional care programmes is also offered. The service is registered for pre-school children aged 2 and 8 months to 6 years of age.

A child centred play based preschool curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided. The registered provider advised that the children play predominantly outside. The children benefit developmentally, build awareness and confidence around nature and their surroundings.

There is a secure open plan outdoor play area for children's play and exploration. There is also a purpose-built prefabrication unit with a classroom, sanitary areas, a kitchenette, and an all-weather sheltered area. There is a floored polytunnel with low tables and chairs and everyday items to encourage children's natural curiosity and eagerness to explore and create.

The children also have to an organic garden (polytunnels and a chicken coop) which is adjacent to the preschool.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and there is a named person to deputise if required. A total of four adults including the registered provider work directly with the children in the service.

The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education.

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 regulations 9,11,19,23,25,26 and 28.

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*

(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 was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises, at all times when pre-school children were present.

(2)(a) &(b)

8 of the 8 validated references on file in respect of the 4 staff were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff.

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

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that 3 of the staff had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and had the required police vetting.

(4) The 4 staff working directly with the children, had evidence of a childcare qualification to at least a major award 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) One staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period in excess of 6 months while over the age of 18 years and did not have the required two police vetting's for the two countries.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider submitted a written response to state the staff member applied for and received a basic clearance from UK not realising that what was required was International Child Protection Certificate (ICPC). The staff member will apply for this immediately.

The staff member is still awaiting her second clearance to be processed also.

Supporting documentation submitted

The registered provider submitted a basic disclosure from the UK, and a screenshot of contact made with the second country.

Summary Comment

The early years inspectorate has assessed the actions taken and evidence submitted and deems it not to address the non-compliance as the police vetting from both countries remains outstanding.

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) Documentary evidence indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) The registered provider always ensured that, the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

- On the morning of the inspection, there were 24 children with four adults present.
- From 12.30 midday, there were 21 children with three adults present. All children were aged 2 years and 8 months to 6 years of age.

(8)(a) Documentary evidence in the form of staff rosters indicated that the registered provider ensured that there were always 2 staff on the premises while the pre-school was operating.

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

- The snacks were supplied by the parents/guardians. The children were given sufficient time to eat in an unhurried manner. The foods provided complied with the service's healthy eating policy. Healthy eating was promoted within the service.
- The children sat at the long tables in the polytunnel. for their snack. The snacks consisted of cheese, vegetable / fruit pieces, crackers, sandwiches, sausage rolls, bagels wraps, bread rolls, rice cakes, with water to drink.
- The children were given enough time to eat and enjoyed their snack without being rushed. The children chatted freely about what foods they liked.
- Children's own bottles were available and accessible to allow children to 'self-serve' when thirsty. The registered provider provided extra drinking water to any child wanting more.
- On the day of the inspection, the children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their level of independence. The staff guided and supported children who needed additional help.
- The staff supervised children's hand washing before and after snack time, after toileting, after blowing their noses, after messy play and at drop off and collection times.
- The children and adults were suitably dressed in all-weather clothing.
- The children played, ate, and spent all the period of the inspection in the outdoor environment.
- The children had plenty of opportunities to move about freely, exploring their environment, and improving their emerging skills such as coordination and balance.
- On speaking with the staff, the inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the preschool including the child's likes, interests, preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times.
- The staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests.

- The staff provided significant opportunities for each child to decide their play activities and experiences. They were observed helping children to find solutions, by supporting them and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff acknowledged a child's achievements, 'well done', 'that's great' and the children were observed laughing and having fun.
- Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict.

The staff supported children in forming and sustaining positive relationships by -

- having a key person system for each child,
- showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust,
- listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language,
- using soft tones, the child's individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact,
- providing opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
- providing opportunities for children to learn from each other and with each other, to work together, join in and contribute to projects and tasks,
- working with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life, and any other concerns.
- The children had unrestricted access to the toilets and did not have to wait to use the toilets.
- The staff used the correct language surrounding toileting.
- On the day of inspection, the registered provider advised all the children in attendance were toilet trained. A nappy changing area was available if required.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax in a designated cosy area in the playroom.

Physical and material environment

- Play equipment with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore, were freely accessible and available.
- The environment was visually pleasing allowing children to think for themselves and extend their learning.
- On the day of inspection, the play equipment and materials were freely available and accessible to the children.

- The environment was flexible and responsive to the emerging changing needs, preferences, and interests
- It was advised by the registered provider that additional play equipment and materials were stored in the classroom and rotated on a seasonal/ theme basis.

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:

- Waste disposal facilities were inaccessible to the preschool children.
- The entrance door of the pre-school service was secured on arrival to the service with buzzer system in place and remained secured throughout the inspection thus preventing children from exiting and unauthorised persons from entering the premises.
- A high-level lock was provided at the entrance door to prevent a child from exiting and unauthorised person from entering the area.
- Cleaning products were stored in a locked press in the kitchenette which was inaccessible to the preschool children.
- There were no trailing flexes in the service.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hand washing without risk of scalding the children, was available to facilitate hygienic hand washing.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- The service had a risk assessment system for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The registered provider clearly identified to the early years' inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of danger to the pre-school children.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The registered provider advised that the outdoor play equipment would be cleaned prior to/ after a child's use, with documented records maintained.
- A refrigerator was provided in the kitchenette and the sheltered area for the storage of perishable foods.
- The preschool room was observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The registered provider had a cleaning schedule template for the materials, equipment, and furnishings in the room and the outdoor area.
- Foot pedal operated lidded bins were provided in the service for the disposal of waste.
- The water in the sanitary areas was thermostatically controlled to ensure effective hand washing. The temperature taken on the day was 36.9 and 38.1°C which is within the recommended range of maximum 43°C for effective handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

- It was advised that there was no child presently on medication and the adults present demonstrated clear knowledge of safe practices regarding the administration of medication should it be required to be administered to a child.

Fire Safety:

- All exit routes from the service were free from obstruction during the inspection.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. Four staff members had current training in first aid for children.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.

(b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school.

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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated 3rd of December 2025.

(b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and the smoke and fire detection alarm system with the annual service dated 21st of January 2025.

(4) A notice was displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire on the wall in the pre-school room and in the outdoor area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2026 was for 25 part time children and included the following -

- public liability insurance,
- insurance against fire and theft,
- insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.