

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018LK505
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Name of Service:	Seedling Nature Schools
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Address of Service:	Limerick East ETNs, Dromdarrig, Mungret, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 27P3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Johanna Davis
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	11
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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).

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Description of service

This preschool facility is registered to provide parttime and sessional care from 09:00 to 14:00 hours, Monday – Friday, under the Early Childhood care and Education Scheme.

The service is a full time outdoors preschool service where children play outdoors with access to a playroom in a specially designed yurt, a wooden open shelter and a newly erected greenhouse play structure.

A traditional style carriage is used as the bathroom facilities for the children.

Suitable sanitary facilities for the adults are available in the school premises.

The outdoors preschool operates from a large site on the grounds of the local national school.

A breakfast club and a school aged service is also available to the children.

Staffing

There are 12 staff members including the registered provider working in the service each day. All staff working at the service have achieved an award in Early Childhood Care 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 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)(c) 2(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

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Regulation 11(2)

Regulation 19(1a)

Regulation 25

Regulation 29

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, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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 was present on the day of the inspection. There was a person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that a person in charge was always available at the service.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The files of 12 staff members including the new staff members working in the service since the last inspection dated the 8th of February 2024 were reviewed.

(a) There were 14 written and validated references submitted by staff from previous employers on file.

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- (b) There were 10 written and validated references submitted by staff from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for 12 staff members employed to work in the service. The Garda vetting for 12 staff was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 8 staff members who had resided outside of jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The 12 staff members had the appropriate childcare qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) On the day of the inspection there were 11 staff members working with 23 pre-school children present in the morning and 11 staff working with 11 preschool children present after 12 30 pm.

The minimum ratio of staff to children were working directly with the children throughout the service.

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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

Relationship and Interactions around children:

The service supports children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with the staff members.

There was a key person assigned to each child. The staff knew each child individually by name, their likes, dislikes and interest. When talking to the children they got down to their level and were observed making eye contact. They were observed listening to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, their feelings and thoughts and their experiences both verbally and non-verbally by reading the children's cues, gestures and body language.

The staff were observed to respond to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and positive way. When a child got upset or tired they were observed offering comfort and nurture. There were many opportunities for small and large group activities and play, to support children working together on different tasks, eating and playing together and to recognise and accept their differences and similarities. Children benefited from frequent environment transitions in the extended outdoor play in well-furnished outdoor spaces across the site. Sheltered spaces outdoors ensured outdoor play opportunities were available in all weather conditions. The children were dressed in their outdoor wet gear and children in all areas of the service got to spend lots of time outdoors each day, regardless of weather conditions.

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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 4 staff members working in the service with the updated certification in first aid responder (FAR) for children.
- A first aid officer was also appointed at the facility.
- (2)(a) First aid boxes were stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions on site at the facility.
- (b) The first aid boxes were available if required by a child.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
 - (b) safe and secure,*
 - (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (a) The outdoors areas and the sheltered accommodation appeared to be sound and stable with no visible defects.
- (b) The entrance and exit areas were secure to prevent children from exiting and to prevent unauthorised access.
- (c) Heating, ventilation and lighting were adequate in the outdoor sheltered areas of the service.
- (d) The sanitary facilities and the enclosed outdoor shelters were clean and well maintained.

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(e) Suitable sanitary facilities were available for the staff members in the National school premises.
All waste was managed appropriately.