

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019RN001
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Name of Service:	Grovelands Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Unit 1 Monksland Business Park, Old Tuam Road, Athlone, Co. Roscommon
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Eircode:	N37 WK25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Regina Bushell
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, Government Buildings, 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
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Description of service

This sessional service is located within a commercial unit, in the Monksland area, of the town of Athlone, Co. Roscommon. There is a main playroom with adjacent sanitary and office/kitchen areas. The pre-school offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care programme between 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs. The service caters for children 2 years and 8 months to 6 years of age. A quiet rest area with child size seating is available for children to rest or opt out of an activity if he/ she wishes to do so. There is a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the premises for children's play and exploration. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on emerging interests is offered. The service also provides for a school age programme.

Staffing

There is a named person in charge and a named deputy person in charge. Two staff, work in the service and relief staff are available in event of staff absence

The two staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 6 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. 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 the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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 manager, person in charge, 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) There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge 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 the pre-school children were present.

(c) Staff rosters and documentary evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, that identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) Six staff files were reviewed to include the two staff, the registered provider, the supervisor, the manager and the quality development manager

(a)&(b)

Twelve of the twelve written validated references, on file for the staff were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six staff.

The service did adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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

(4) The two staff and the relief staff held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 6 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the staff.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(3) Documentary evidence in the form of staff rosters indicated that adult child ratios were adhered to.

On the morning of the inspection, there were nine pre-school children aged between 3 to 5 years. There were two staff working directly with the children. Also, the manager assisted with the administration elements of the inspection and acted as childcare relief.

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,*

Compliance Information

- The children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance. Play activities and experiences were developmentally appropriate and suitably challenging. The children had opportunities to move about freely and explore their environment.
- The children were observed at free play, making puzzles, at messy play, drawing/ painting, playing house / kitchen, using transport vehicles, and at dress up / pretend play. The children were observed stacking,

constructing, shape sorting, connecting, and playing with animals and figurines. The children were observed preparing for their graduation concert, doing action songs and games with the adults.

- The staff acknowledged a child's achievements, 'well done', 'that's great' and the children were observed chatting, laughing and having fun.
- 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 communicated their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures, and body language,
- The staff used soft tones of voice, used the child's individual name, and got down to their level and made eye contact.
- The staff provided opportunities for individual and small group activities and play, leading to increased social awareness, co-operation, collaboration, teamwork, and a sense of belonging,
- It was advised by the person in charge that they work 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 inspector was informed that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests and preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times and via text messages and by phone calls.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- On the day of the inspection the staff showed kindness. They were thoughtful, supportive, and reassuring whilst caring for the children.
- A climate was fostered where the children knew their boundaries. The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'.
- Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. The children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was a healthy eating policy. The person in charge advised that healthy eating was promoted within the service by visual aids, and adherence to best practice guidelines.
- At 11.05hrs, the children had their morning snack which consisted of sandwiches, wraps, rolls, crackers with various fillings, a selection of fruits to include strawberries, apples, mandarins, and grapes. and water or juice to drink.
- Clean and safe drinking water was at a low-level and accessible to children in the playroom.

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 was secure to prevent unauthorised entry.
- The external play area to the rear of the premises was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trip or strangulation hazard.
- The heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Daily records of attendance were kept for all the children attending the service.
- Exit routes and doors were free from obstruction.
- There were foot pedalled lidded bins in the sanitary areas and playroom.
- Visibility stickers and posters were on the door to the reception area.

Infection Control

- Children were observed washing their hands after toileting, messy play and after blowing their noses. The children washed their hands under supervision prior to consuming their snacks
- Suitable hand washing facilities were provided with supplies of liquid soap.
- The playroom had cleaning products and foot operated lidded bins.
- The pre-school room and sanitary areas were well ventilated with the windows open throughout the inspection.
- Tabletops were cleaned immediately prior to children's snack break.
- Mouthed toys were removed after use and sterilised appropriately. The adults were observed regularly washing their hands including after disposing of tissues into bins.
- Fixtures, fittings and play resources were observed to be in a hygienic condition. The adults showed awareness of the services procedures including the management of suspected infection when questioned.
- A refrigerator was provided for the storage of perishable foods.
- There were cleaning schedules and records for the playroom, sanitary areas, and the outdoor area.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.
- Adequate supplies of disposable tissues were readily available in the playroom.

Administration of Medication:

- It was advised by the staff presently no child is on medication.
- The staff demonstrated knowledge of safe practices with regards to the safe storage and administration of medication should it be required.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out on the premises to ensure the children were familiar with the procedure in event of an emergency

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. Three 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 1st of May 2025
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type, and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 12th of September 2024. The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 12th of March 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.

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 22 children and included the following -

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