

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CE001
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Name of Service:	Burren Preschool
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Address of Service:	New Quay National School, New Quay, Burren, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	H91 HY40
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gerry Naughton
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	17/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy
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

Burren Preschool was established in 2020 and is located in New Quay National School, in North Clare. The service is facilitated Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 for 38 weeks of the year for children ranging in age from three to six years. A play based educational programme is provided in one large room. Outdoor play areas are located to the rear of the service and the children have access to a large, enclosed yard to the front of the building.

Staffing

On the 17 June 2025 the manager facilitated the programme of care and education. An emergency contact/relief person was available as required within close proximity of the service. The registered provider is part of the board of management and does not work in the service.

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.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)(8)(c)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28- Insurance

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. 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 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*

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and an emergency contact person is available within close proximity to cover in the event of an emergency.

(b)

The manager was the designated person in charge and was available at all times during the inspection.

Three files were available and reviewed in respect of the registered provider, the manager, and the emergency contact person.

(2)

(a)

Four written references with evidence of verification were available from past employers.

(b)

Two verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the registered provider, the manager and the emergency contact person. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Not applicable, as the adults working in the service had not lived outside the State for a period longer than six months.

(4)

Two adults held an Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 7 and Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults work directly with the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

(3)

The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained at all times. The manager worked directly with the eight children in attendance.

(8)(c)

The service is operated single-handedly by the manager. A second adult is available within close proximity of the service to provide relief cover when required.

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

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities and interactions having regard to the age and developmental level of the children. One care room was in operation during the inspection.

Basic Needs of Children:

The children's learning, development, and well-being was supported by the adult who treated the children with respect. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, the children were praised and encouraged during all the activities. The adult demonstrated an awareness of the children's individual capabilities, needs and learning interests. The adult interacted warmly with the children, listened attentively to their stories and questions, responding promptly with interest.

The children were supported to be independent, according to their age and stage of development which included using the toilet, caring for their belongings and retrieving their lunches from their bags. Open ended play and educational activities predominated for the duration of the inspection and the children were free to select which activities they chose to engage with. The children's language development and communication skills were supported through the positive and on-going conversations and visual aids observed during the inspection. The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their meal in a relaxed and unhurried environment. Lunchtime was observed to be a sociable occasion for the children who could sit and chat with their peers. The children transitioned from open ended construction, pretend and sensory play to song, rhyme and dance to story-time, mealtime and group play activities.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environment featured an appropriate range of equipment and play materials for the age range and developmental level of the children. The indoor play setting was bright, spacious and colourful which was decorated to reflect the children's sense of identity and belonging. The walls displayed children's artwork and illustrated learning aids linked to curricular themes which the children had been learning.

The layout of the indoor environment was carefully considered to encourage children to make choices and initiate self-directed play and activities. Resources were easily accessible, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to independently access the toys, equipment and materials they chose to play with. The room enabled the children to move around unhindered and appropriate furnishings of low-level shelving, tables and chairs were available to facilitate mealtimes and tabletop activities. Defined interest areas included a home corner with natural life materials, a shop area, a dress up area, an area with a seated section and shelving unit with a large range of books, a construction area and art section.

The outdoor play areas were accessible directly from the preschool room to the rear of the service and a large yard was available to the front of the building. The outdoor area to the rear of the building had a grass surface, and the surrounding perimeter was enclosed by fencing and a gate and externally by the school yard and a gated entrance. The play area offered the children a space to engage in physical, sensory and pretend play. A section was available for the children to plant vegetables and flowers.

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 entrance to the sessional service was secured to monitor the entry of unauthorised persons to the childcare facility.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service and were supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, after using the toilet and on return from outdoor play and before mealtime.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually.
- A refrigerator was available to store the children's perishable food items.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- The registered provider demonstrated an awareness of the administration of medication policy.
- Documentation was available for the adults to use should medication be administered in the service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit and routes and were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point and fire exit routes were readily identifiable with signage.
- A fire action notice was displayed at the fire exit points in the building.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- The manager stated that outings are not currently undertaken by 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)

An adult had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in an accessible and conspicuous area in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available in the service for use by the adult in the event of an emergency.

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.

(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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 17 June 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively in November 2024 and June 2025.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for eleven pre-school children. The insurance policy for the sessional service is valid until the 27 March 2026.