

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020GY002
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Stars
-------------------------	--------------

Address of Service:	Caheroyane Ave, Athenry, Co. Galway
----------------------------	-------------------------------------

Eircode:	H65 E802
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Sandra Noone
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	12/01/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	0
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	---

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla-Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A – (1st Floor-Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
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 sessional service is in a residential area called Caheroyane in the town of Athenry in a purpose-built building. The registered provider operates a sessional service for pre-school children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service offers an early childhood care and education sessional programme from 09.00 to 12.00, Monday to Friday. The premises has a pre-school playroom, school aged playroom and a kitchen. There were also sanitary facilities and a secured outdoor play area to the front of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider and deputy manager were working directly with the children in attendance.

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 registered provider, deputy manager 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) 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 and deputy manager were on the premises for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place, each adult's roles and responsibilities were displayed in the service.
- Both adult files were reviewed, which included the registered provider and deputy manager.
- (2)(a) One of the four validated references on file in respect of the two adults was from a past employer.
- (b) Three of the four validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for the two adults. This was in adherence with 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 neither of the 2 adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting.
- (4) The two adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 6, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the two adults.

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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained. On the morning of the inspection there were seven children present with two adults on a sessional basis.

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

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The healthy eating policy was available for parents and guardians to view. The snacks observed on the day were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Perishable items that were belonging to preschool children were stored in the service fridge.
- Crockery and plates used during children's snack times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Children had their own labelled water bottle to drink from when thirsty and the service also supplied water.

- Children attending the service were toilet trained and toileted independently or with some assistance or support from adults as required. There was a nappy changing area available but there were no children in nappies on the day of inspection.
- The children's self-care was assisted and encouraged by adults, for example to wash their hands prior to eating and after toileting.
- In the playroom the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in a designated cosy area.

Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians, conduct observations to support each child's developmental needs.
- Each child had a learning journal identifying their likes and preferences, showing their art and craft work for the year.
- The emerging interests of the children were recorded to inform the short-term planning.
- Transitions between activities were well planned by staff and were carried out in a calm and relaxed manner. Good communication between adults in planning activities was observed.
- Documented evidence of observations for children was available and linked to the overall curriculum planning.
- The service had documented evidence of short, medium and long-term planning to meet each child's stage of development.
- The theme was 'The Arctic' and children were observed making penguins.
- Children were observed in the outdoor area, circle time, free play, snack time and arts/crafts.

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 did provide evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. There was an adult present on the day with a first aid responder in date certification.
- (2)(a) The first aid box was accessible and in a conspicuous position in the playroom.
- (b) The first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending 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 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 12 December 2026.
- (b) Records were available in relation to the number, type and maintenance of fire-fighting equipment with the annual service dated 26 August 2025.
- The smoke and fire detection alarm system for the premises had the last annual service dated 26 August 2025.
- (4) Notices were displayed within the service of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children attending and was in date to the 27th March 2026.