

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020GY004			
Name of Service:	Wonders Years Educate Together			
Address of Service:	Educate Together National School, Lakeview, Claregalway, Co. Galway			
Eircode:	H91 F5EH			
Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine O'Connor			
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	10/11/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	5
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.			
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel			
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

Wonder Years Educate Together is a private part-time and sessional service operating from its present location since 2019. While registered to accommodate children aged from 2 to 6 years of age children currently attending are aged from 2 years 6 months to 6 years old. Hours of operation are from 09:00 to 14:00 within which the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is accommodated between the hours of 09:15 and 12:15 Monday to Friday, school term time only. A school age service is available in the morning from 08:00 to 09:10 and in the afternoon from 14:00 to 18:00.

The service operates from a designated classroom within the Educate Together National School in Claregalway, county Galway. It has one large classroom off which there are children's sanitary areas. The children have access to a designated outdoor play area within a quadrangle of classrooms. In addition, they have access to the school hall, library, yoga room and artificial grass area. Car parking is located at the front of the service.

Staffing

There are 3 staff employed working directly with the children in the service including the registered provider.

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, 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.*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise as required.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that both the person in charge and the named person were available while the early years children were on the premises.
- (2) The recruitment files of the 3 adults were reviewed.
- (a) All 6 of the validated references were from previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all 3 adults demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) Overseas police vetting was available for 1 adult for whom it was required who had lived outside of Ireland for more than 6 months as an adult.
- (3) The dates on the documents specified in paragraph (2) indicated that the procedures were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Staff files viewed on the day indicated that the 3 adults working directly with the children had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 6 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by Minister to be equivalent.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children during the part-time hours of the service.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met. There were 3 adults observed working directly with 12 children when the inspector arrived at the service and throughout the morning until 12:15. In the afternoon there were 3 adults working with 5 children until 14:00.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were 3 adults on the premises while the early years children were present in the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The pre-school records of the 17 children attending the service were reviewed. These were found to contain all relevant details from particulars (a) to (i) above for each of the children's records.

(3)

(c) The 17 records of the pre-school children were furnished to the inspector on the premises.

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

Supporting children's relationships:

- A key person approach was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for maintaining relationships with a designated group of children and their parents/guardians.
- Adults in the care room who were supervising children playing in both the indoor and outdoor areas, were observed to work well as a team. They were heard, on several occasions, discussing children's individual needs frequently throughout the day.
- Reminders were given verbally by the adults during the morning routines so that the children could anticipate and prepare themselves for transitions. Examples included an adult informing the children verbally of the countdown to tidy up time when completing their activities.
- The adults in the care room were observed acting on children's verbal cues and providing a flexible routine to respond to individual children's needs. Examples included a staff member acting quickly when a child having snack spoke with one of the adults stating that the sun was hurting their eyes, the adult used the winder to bring down the blind on the window. On a separate occasion at lunch time an adult at the table asked a child with a sad face, would they like more food which was positively responded too with the adult making the child buttered crackers. In addition, an adult was heard adapting the programme of

activities from the classroom to the hall bringing the children availing of the part-time service, who were becoming boisterous, for physical play in the hall where they were observed expending their energy.

- Children were given many opportunities to increase their independence. The adults were heard encouraging and praising self-help skills such as when the children were observed putting on and taking off outdoor clothing; storing them away on their individually labelled hooks, stacking their chairs after meals and putting their lunch boxes back into their bags when finished. At circle time a child was given responsibility for putting up their name as a helper and choosing the season and weather and placing them on a board for their friends to see.
- Various forms of communication with parents/guardians were stated as being in use including a messaging application furnished to the inspector detailing information such as school breaks and lost and found items. The adults in the service were observed in conversation with the parents/guardians at the service entrance.
- The adults stated that staff meetings take place each Friday where topics for discussion include curriculum planning and resources required, up and coming events, holidays and the children’s development.

Planning of activities:

- Detailed short-medium- and long-term curriculum planning was available and furnished to the inspector. Artwork and photographs on the classroom walls evidenced that associated activities were being carried out on a daily basis.
- Ongoing observations, linked to both national frameworks of quality and curriculum, were documented and photographed, which helped create a complete, well-rounded picture of each individual child. These were furnished to the inspector and were noted to be sent home every Friday. These observations informed the planning of the curriculum. Documented notes of the children’s emergent curriculum were observed to be posted daily on a wipe board during the inspection.
- Children’s first learning scrapbooks labelled with each child’s name, which had been put together by staff, were available for the inspector to view. These included photographs of the children involved in seasonal related activities along with their artwork. Examples included children cutting out coloured paper and sticking them onto hedgehogs and squirrels as part of the service’s theme of hibernation.
- Children’s language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the day. Examples including a staff member heard reading “Little Red Riding Hood,” songs sung included “Days of the Week,” and “What’s the Weather” and the nursery

rhymes of “Humpty Dumpty” from which a discussion ensued about what happens to the character when they fall.

- The adults facilitated the children to make their own choice in selecting play equipment and activities they wished to engage with. Turn taking and sharing was promoted, this was evidenced by many children working collaboratively together. An example included a child who had brought in a watch sharing it with another child and collecting it before going home. The adults modelled language to the children and were heard expressing how kind the child was this was to share their watch.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Having regard to the number of children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises; there were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors. The children had access to a yoga classroom next door to their classroom, a beautifully presented, well-resourced, library with soft furnishings, a well-lit gym hall in use on the day and an additional outdoor area with artificial grass. The classroom was laid out in clearly defined areas with equipment and toys providing play and learning opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. The equipment and toys were located on low-level shelving within easy access of the children, offering choice and encouraging independence.

A number of resources were observed in use for providing opportunities to practice gross motor skills of kicking, batting, throwing and rocking in both the outdoor play area and in the hall, examples included bats, balls, bean bags and ride-ons. Sensory materials including sand and stones were available from covered troughs in the outdoor play area. Imaginary play opportunities were available from a mud kitchen and a wooden shop.

The outdoor play area was secured within a quadrangle of classrooms and the main entrance to the outdoor area had two metal gates with sliding bolts ensuring that no unauthorised adults could enter the area or that no child could leave the area unsupervised.

- (b) There was a cosy and inviting designated rest/quiet area with soft furnishings, a comfortable two-seater sofa for the adults and the children along with a Quenn Ann chair, vinyl sofa, vinyl chair, pouffe and cushions. Four mats were available in the event that a child required a rest or sleep, none were observed sleeping on the day of inspection. The light in the area could be adjusted by a dimmer switch and the blinds on the windows lowered to adjust the daylight entering the area. Developmentally appropriate books were available from wall mounted shelves in the area providing opportunities for language development while resting. In addition, the adults stated that the library room nearby was also in use as a quiet, peaceful space, if required.

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

A healthy eating policy had been shared with parents/guardians on enrolment who provided the children's meals and snacks for the sessional and part-time services. Children availing of the part-time service had access to lunch boxes which contained the required 2 meals and 1 snack. Additional food was available in the service if required.

- Food observed being consumed during the day was healthy and nutritious in line with the service's healthy eating policy; snacks consisted of yogurts, cheese, crackers and bite sized pieces of fruit and vegetables while lunches included spaghetti, filled wraps and sandwiches. Children had access to their lunch boxes throughout the day.
- Additional food was available in the service and children were given plates to put their food on.
- A water station was visible where the children were observed accessing their individual water bottles. A filter tap was available for the children to refill their bottles, if required.
- In line with the service's healthy eating policy the adults sat, engaging in social conversation, while assisting the children opening packages. The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed and happy.
- Suitable tables and chairs were available for the children to sit while eating their food. Children were encouraged to put away their food and store their chair when finished.

- Children were given sufficient time to eat without being rushed. Transitional activities were available with those who had finished observed washing their hands and listening to a story being read by an adult in the rest/quiet area.
- A microwave was available for the reheating of food and perishable food was observed stored in the fridge.

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:

- Staff were present at the main entrance door of the service ensuring that no unauthorised adults could gain entry and that no unsupervised child could leave the service.
- Window handles were operated with a window crank handle all of which were inaccessible by the children.
- Three blind cords, visible on the walls beside the windows, were secured out of reach of the children.
- All toys and equipment in the indoor and outdoor areas appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Flexes and cables from the fridge and microwave were inaccessible by the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored under the sink area secured with a children's safety catch.
- The outdoor play area was secured within a quadrangle of classrooms. The entry gates were secured with sliding bolts preventing children from leaving the area unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins in use by both adults and children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, 23°C, foam soap and hand towels located in a holder. Pedal operated bins were available for the hygienic disposal of paper waste.
- Staff were observed sanitising tables and sweeping the floors after food ensuring the area remained clean and hygienic.
- Handwashing was observed; before and after meals, coming in from outdoor play and after toileting in line with the service's infection control policy. Adults were nearby to assist, if required.
- Children's personal belongings were stored on hooks away from the floor area.

- The cleaning checklist was observed to be available for the week beginning 10 November 2025. Previous fully completed checklists, which were stored in a cupboard, were available to view.

Administration of Medication:

- Two bottles of temperature reducing medication, stored in their original containers were available in the event of an emergency. The expiry dates were noted as 09/26 and 09/27 respectively.

Safe Sleep:

- Four sleep mats were available in the event children required to rest or sleep.

Fire Safety:

- Fire extinguishers were secured with brackets to the walls of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished to the inspector which included the following details:

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 22 Pre-school
36 School age care
- The type of service: Part-time
- Expiry date: 27 March 2026.