

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020TY003
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Name of Service:	Caterpillars Childcare Killeen
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Address of Service:	Killeen, Templederry, Nenagh, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45EY15
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Name of Registered Provider:	Grainne Harte
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	09/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	43
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney and A McNamara
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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	N/A
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Description of service

This service was established in 2020 to provide care and education to children aged between 0 and 6 years old on a full day, part time or sessional basis. A registered school age care service is also provided.

The service operates Monday – Friday, 7am – 6pm, for 51 weeks of the year. During the 38-week school year from late August until June, a sessional service, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children, is also provided.

The service is located in a rural setting, in the village of Killeen, near Nenagh, in north Tipperary. The premises is a detached, single storey building that was formerly a primary school. The service had works carried out since the last inspection to divide rooms and make additional spaces for the different age groups. There are five activity rooms, including one room which is dedicated for use by school age children in the afternoons during term time and all day during the school holidays. The other four rooms are for use by the pre-school children: Baby room, Toddler room, Pre-school room 2 and Pre-school room 3. The school age room becomes Pre-school room 1 in the mornings during term time. The service also has a sleep room, kitchen, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas.

This is one of three services operated under the umbrella of Caterpillars Childcare in north Tipperary and there is a fourth service in Co Laois.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but visits at least once a week and is available to call on when required. The service manager was the person in charge on the day of inspection. There were nine other staff working directly with the pre-school children. In addition, one member of staff was dedicated to catering and another to working with the school age children.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23 and 25.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, Record of the Pre-school Child.

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 inspectors wish 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named deputy designated person in charge who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present for the inspection.

The staff files for 15 staff employed in the service were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 15 staff members. In the case of four staff members, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice,

requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period exceeding six consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Police vetting has been applied for in respect of the member of staff who lived outside the state. A strengthened procedure has been put in place at interview stage to question about out of state residence and conduct.

Overall responsibility for the garda vetting process has moved to the Administration Officer.

Summary Comment

Evidence of an application for the staff member for International Police Vetting was reviewed however, a copy of the completed International Police vetting has not been submitted for this staff member to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to regulation 9(2)(d) remains outstanding.

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) There were 10 staff working directly with 42 children aged between 11 months and 5 years old across 4 activity rooms by 10am on the morning of the inspection. School age children and staff were additional to this number and were not included in the inspection findings.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the requirements.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service while it was in operation.

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) A sample size of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registration forms contained the information required under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The information required under parts (a) to (k) of this regulation were available on the premises in a variety of formats including paper based and electronic records.

(3) The required records were available on the premises and open to inspection by an authorised person.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The children were observed washing their hands at appropriate times during the day, in particular, before eating, after using the toilet and after outdoor play. There were sinks in the sanitary accommodation areas and in some of the activity rooms which gave the children easy access to hand washing facilities and enabled the staff to supervise the children and support good hand washing practices.

The staff were observed to be engaged with the children, to sit on the floor or at tables where the children were engaged in activities and to support the children's exploration of their environment and what interested them.

The service had engaged with a 'forest school' pilot project run by the Education Training Board (ETB) this term. The forest school was set up at the back of the playing pitch in an area with mature trees and shrubs, paths cut through wild grasses, a tent for sheltered play and natural play resources in a wooded grove. The forest school operated on Fridays and was facilitated by the project leader, who was also a parent of a child attending the service. The children learnt about nature, wildlife and plants, used natural materials to create furniture and play resources and engaged their senses to explore and enjoy this managed wilderness experience. The staff said that

the children loved their time in the forest school and looked forward to it. This project was available to the children in the ECCE rooms for now.

A sleep and rest area for the babies and toddlers had been developed in the Baby room since the last inspection. Cots were available along one wall where the children could sleep or rest when they wanted to. This was in addition to the sleep room. The room was large enough to accommodate this without taking from the required play space. Staff said that this worked particularly well for children when they were settling into the service or getting used to sleeping in a cot, that having the other children and staff nearby was comforting for them.

The service had triple and quad buggies available so that they could take groups of babies and toddlers out for walks.

The children had access to drinking water throughout the day. Each child had their own drink bottle that was kept in the service, washed daily and refilled with water as often as needed.

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 service was secured from unauthorised entry or exit by having an electronic locking system on the entrance door and by the outdoor area being fenced and gated. Children could not gain unsupervised access to the roadway in front of the premises. Access to the forest school at the back of the premises was supervised by staff.

Blackout blinds in the sleep room were retractable and did not have cords.

Soft fall surfacing covered the ground under and around the climbing equipment in the outdoor play area.

The children did not have access to the kitchen.

Infection control:

The service had an infection prevention and control policy and hand washing policy.

There was a hand washing sink with liquid soap and paper towels in the entrance lobby where children, staff and visitors could wash their hands before entering the service.

Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. Signed parental consent was sought prior to medication being given to a child attending the service. Medication record sheets were available in each room and completed by staff when medication was given to a child.

Safe sleep:

The service had a safe sleep policy. Children were monitored while they slept, either by staff being present in the room or by ten-minute sleep checks when children were sleeping in the sleep room. Sleep checks were recorded using an electronic application which parents could access and view.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

The service did not ensure that all staff were re-vetted on a three-yearly basis. On the day of the inspection, Garda vetting for four members of staff was completed more than three years ago.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The four staff members have been re-vetted. The administration officer has now taken full responsibility for the Garda vetting process.

Summary Comment

All evidence submitted meets the requirements Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the service.