

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022MO003
Name of Service:	Joanna's Preschool and Afterschool
Address of Service:	Bonniconlon, Ballina, Co. Mayo
Eircode:	F26 PK26
Name of Registered Provider:	Joanne Sheridan
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	14/02/2025
No of pre-school children:	AM 29 PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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

Joanna's Preschool and Afterschool is a privately owned and operated sessional service located on the grounds of a primary school in Bonniclon village in County Mayo. The service caters for children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to operate morning sessions from 9.30am to 12.30midday and also to provide school aged services. The premises is a purpose-built detached building and has two playrooms, an entrance lobby, office, and a kitchenette that is accessible from both playrooms. There is a small sluice room, staff sanitary unit and accessible sanitary unit located off the entrance lobby. The children have access to an enclosed outdoor play area located to the side of the building.

Staffing

There are ten staff working in the service including childcare staff and administrative staff. One of the staff members is employed through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Scheme. The registered provider works between the service and a sister service. There was one adult student on work placement in the service at the time of the inspection.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

- (2) There were eleven adults in the service including administrative staff and an adult student at the time of the inspection. The following vetting documents were available on file for the eleven adults:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for six adults. One written validated reference from a past employer for four adults.
 - (b) One written validated reference from sources other than past employers for five adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eleven adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was not required for any of the adults.
- (4) Evidence of the required qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent was available for the nine adults who worked directly with the preschool children.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a) A written validated reference was required from one staff member's most recent employer.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(2)(a)

The registered provider advised in writing that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has obtained a reference from the staff member's last employer. In future the service will make sure new employees have a reference from their last employer.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the reference.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate and been found to have addressed the non-compliance found under Regulation 9 on inspection.

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) There were 6 adults working directly with 26 children on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service. A further 3 children arrived later to the service bringing the total of children present to 29. Discussion with staff and review of attendance records found that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in the service.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children attending sessional services for the age range of these children of 1 adult to each 11 children was met. There were 3 adults caring for 16 children present in Room 1 and 3 adults caring for the 13 children in Room 2.

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) to (i)

A random sample of ten of children's records were selected from across both playrooms and reviewed by the inspector. The children's records contained the information required under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The staff made the written records required available to the inspector on the premises when requested to.

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 door was secured on the inspector's unannounced arrival to the service and remained secured during the inspection with staff controlling access to the building. The staff admitted the inspector following production and review of identification documentation. The internal doors to the playrooms from the lobby area had electronic control systems in place preventing children from leaving unnoticed and unauthorised access by people. The internal doors connecting the playrooms to the kitchen had securing systems allowing staff to control access to the kitchen. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen and were inaccessible to the children. The enclosed outdoor area to the side of the building was secured. The toys and play equipment were in good condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them.

Infection Control:

Windows in playrooms were opened at times by staff to ventilate the areas. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for waste disposal and observed to be used correctly. The service was observed to be very clean with staff cleaning down surfaces such as tables after use. Cleaning checklists were kept up to date by staff. The staff

also conducted daily risk checklists each day and recorded findings on record sheets that were displayed in the playrooms. The children's snacks provided from home were stored in a refrigerator on the children's arrival to the service. The children in Room 1 were observed to be reminded by the staff to wash their hands before eating. Warm water and liquid soap were available at wash hand basins for handwashing with paper towel provided for drying hands. Aprons and gloves were provided for staff to wear when changing nappies in the nappy changing area.

Administration of Medication:

The staff informed the inspector that none of the children needed medication to be administered to them while in the service. The staff were aware of correct procedures for the administration of medication in the service in accordance with the service's policy.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

The service undertook outings from the service with the children. The registered provider informed the inspector that risk assessments were undertaken by the staff prior to undertaking outings. Evidence of the risk assessments for the most recent outings undertaken were made available for inspection by the registered provider.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A designated member of staff checked each child in and out of the service during the inspection and recorded the details on an attendance record.

(3) (a) There was a visitor record in the hallway of the service. The visitor record showed that the staff approved the entry to the service of people other than a preschool child attending the service, a person dropping off a preschool child, employee or unpaid worker.

(b) The records contained dated entries of visitors to 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) First Aid Responder (FAR) training certificates were available for three members of staff with expiry dates of the 26 August 2026. At least one staff member with FAR training was present in the service when children were present and available to provide first aid if needed.
- (2) (a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes stored conspicuously on high windowsills in both playrooms. The first aid boxes had adequate supplies of equipment for the number of children in the service.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily available if needed for a child.

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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) Written records of the monthly fire drills undertaken in the service were kept by the staff. Records showed that the last fire drill was undertaken on the 21 January 2025.

- (b) There were records available of the number, type and annual maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on 12 September 2024 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 18 October 2024.
- (2) (c) The records were made available in the service to the inspector by the staff on request.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed if a fire occurred in the service were clearly displayed in the playrooms.

Part VI - Safety
Regulation 28 - Insurance
<i>A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.</i>
Compliance Information
The service had insurance in place to provide sessional services for a maximum of 44 children at any one time valid until the 27 March 2025.