

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023CC002
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Name of Service:	Curious Minds Rusheen
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Address of Service:	Rusheen National School, Coachford, Rusheen, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P12 C981
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Sheehy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	12
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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).

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Description of service

Curious Minds Rusheen is a private early years care and education service which opened in September 2023. The service is registered to operate from 7.00am to 6.00pm and is opened 52 weeks of the year, and a sessional service is facilitated between the hours of 9.30 am to 12.30 pm. A breakfast club is available from 7.00 am until 9.30 am and an afterschool service is available from 2.00 pm until 6.00 pm.

Curious Minds Rusheen operates from one of four classrooms located at the front of Rusheen National School, in the rural area of Rusheen in County Cork. There are two children's toilets, one of which has a fold down nappy changing unit, and one adult toilet located in the main school corridor opposite the classroom. The children have shared use of a large ball court, fairy and sensory gardens located at the side of the service, and a secure outdoor play area at the entrance area to the service. A carpark is located at the side of the service to facilitate parents/guardians dropping and collecting children at the premises. This service is part of a multiple service provider.

Staffing

There were eight adults attached to the service on the day of inspection. This included the registered provider who is not service based, the person in charge, deputy person in charge, four relief early years educators and an office administrative worker.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9: Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11: Staffing levels

Regulation 15: Record of a Pre-School Child

Regulation 19: Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 22: Food and Drink

Regulation 23: Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25: First Aid

Regulation 26: Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 29: Premises

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 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*
- (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 service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.
- (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service. This was determined through review of the staff roster.
- (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, early years educators and relief early years educators.

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- (2) There were eight adults attached to the service. All eight files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 16 references required, 14 validated references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Of the 16 references required, 2 validated references were available from an alternative source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all eight adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for three of the eight adults working in the service. All required documentation was available on file for the three adults.
- (4) The seven adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 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.*
- (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.

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(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation. An Easter camp was in operation on day of inspection where both early years children and school age children were present.

- In the Curious Minds room there was 3 staff working with 17 children, aged between 2 years and 9 months and 4 years and 10 months, all attending full day care. Of the 17 children present on the day, 8 of these children were school age children. In the afternoon there was 3 staff present with 12 children aged between 3 years and 4 years and 10 months. Of these 12 children, 6 were school age children.

(8) Following review of the staff roster, it was evident that at least two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) Twelve children were registered to attend the service. A copy of all 12 enrolment records was available on day of inspection and open for review. Ten records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

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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

(1) (a)

Basic needs:

- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the day.
- Parents/guardians provided snacks for children. Snacks included rolls, wraps, fruit and yoghurts.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.
- There was a supply of tissues available to the children and staff supported children with cleaning their noses when required.

Supporting relationships:

- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills for example; putting their own coats and shoes on and staff supported children when required.
- The staff in the playroom were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking with the children and spoke to them at child level.
- During mealtimes, a relaxed social environment was evident. Staff allowed children to eat at their own pace and engaged in conversations with the children at mealtimes.
- Staff were observant of children's needs and were seen to comfort children when they were upset.

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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

The parents/guardians provided the snacks and meals for children attending the service on day of inspection.

Snacks included sandwiches, wraps, crackers, fruits and various vegetables.

A hot meal was available to children who were attending the service for a full day, these were reheated on site by staff and served to the children. Hot meals included pasta and chicken, potatoes, vegetables and chicken or spaghetti.

Children had access to water throughout the day, and staff were observed to refill children's bottles.

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 internal and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment assessed appeared in good condition and were well maintained.
- Blind cords were securely out of reach of children.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- Perishable food was observed to be stored in the refrigerators.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables and chairs between activities.
- Foot operated bins were available in each room and sanitary facility.

Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.

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Fire safety:

- Fire equipment was available which included fire extinguishers.
- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. The sink temperature in the children's sanitary sink was observed at 46.7°C. Sink temperatures over 43°C posed a risk of burns to the children.
2. The long emergency pull chord in the adult toilet was accessible throughout the morning of the inspection. The door was open and children were observed accessing the sanitary facilities unsupervised. The accessibility to the pull chord posed a risk to the safety of the children.

Infection control:

3. During a routine nappy change, it was observed that the child's hands were not washed after the nappy changing procedure. This posed a risk of infection to the child.
4. It was observed that a cleaning mop was stored in the nappy changing facility. This posed a risk of cross infection to the child.
5. Children's toilet training seats were observed to be stored on top of sanitary bins and pedal bins in the nappy changing area. This posed a risk of infection to the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The service ensured to correct the water temperatures by fixing the water temperature thermostat in the building. This will be reviewed and monitored daily to ensure temperatures remain under 43°C.
2. The registered provider placed a sign on the adult bathroom door to remind all staff to ensure the door remains closed at all times.

Infection control:

3. The nappy changing policy was reviewed by all staff and the importance of the hand-washing procedure was reviewed by staff.
4. The cleaning mops are now stored with the school cleaning supplies in a dedicated area inaccessible to children. Regular checks will be conducted to ensure that all cleaning supplies remain inaccessible to children.
5. The registered provider stated that the children's toilet training seats have a dedicated storage and sanitisation area after use.

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Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection control:

3. A copy of the nappy changing policy was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.
4. The registered provider's statement was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.
5. The registered provider's statement was accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance's identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

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 registered provider ensured that a member of staff with First Aid Response (FAR) training was available to the children at all times.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box was safely stored out of reach of children and easily accessible by adults in the care room.
 - (b) The first aid box was available to the children at all times; in the event they required it.

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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) The service had maintained a record on the following:
- (a) Each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 24 March 2026.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check on the fire extinguishers was 9 September 2025 and the smoke alarm was 27 November 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

- A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) The inspector was unable to determine if adequate ventilation was present in the main room. There was mould like residue present on the ceiling.
- (d) The following was observed on the day of inspection.
- The radiator cover in the main room was not secured to the wall. The cover was easily moved from the radiator.
 - The walls in the main room were observed to have chipped paint and visible stains. This was also observed along the skirting boards near the cosy corner.

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) The registered provider stated in their response that a painter had been booked prior to the inspection and has since attended. The ceiling and walls were cleaned, prepped and painted. This will be monitored and repainted as required.

(d)

- The radiator cover was securely fastened to the wall following the inspection. Ensuring the radiator cover is securely fastened has been added to the service's daily checklist.
- The skirting boards and walls were also cleaned, prepped and painted. These will be cleaned regularly and repainted as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c) Photographic evidence of the painted ceiling was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

(d) Photographic evidence of the radiator cover, skirting boards and walls were received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance's identified under Regulation 29 have been adequately addressed.