

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, 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 Care
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Date of Inspection:	27/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	3	PM	1
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Curious Minds Rusheen is a private early years care and education service which opened in September 2023. While registered for full day care the service currently operates from 9.30 am until 3.00 pm. The service 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

Staffing

There were two staff working directly with the children and the registered provider was available to facilitate the inspection. A relief staff member was on file in the event of staff absence.

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 announced and focused on the areas of governance/ health, welfare and development of the 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, 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.*
- (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 ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise. The registered provider was present along with the designated person to facilitate the inspection.
- (b) The designated person in charge and the named person were both on the premises when the inspector arrived. The staff rosters indicated that both adults were available in the service while the early years children were present.
- (c) In conversation staff stated they were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) As the registered provider's recruitment file had been reviewed previously, recruitment files for the two adults and the relief worker were reviewed.
- (a) (b) There were five validated references from past employers and one validated reference from sources other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all three adults.
- (d) Two international police disclosures were available for two of the adults who had lived outside of Ireland for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

- (3) All staff vetting, references and validations had been carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) There was evidence that two of the adults had attained at a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. The third adult had a Letter of Recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the early years children while they were on the premises.
- (2) The adult/child ratios were met. There were three children in attendance with two adults from 9.30 am until 12.30 pm, when two children were collected after the sessional service. One child stayed on with two adults to avail of the afternoon hours until 3.00 pm.

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 four children registered in the service were reviewed. Each record was found to contain the particulars of (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The records of the pre-school children were open to review on the day of inspection by the inspector.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the designated person in charge, named person and the relief person were kept in the staff recruitment files.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide were available on the Tusla Registration Certificate displayed on the wall in the service.
 - (c) The details of the adult child ratios were available in the service's parent information leaflet.
 - (d) (e) (f) The type of care programme available was in the parent information leaflet along with the facilities available, opening hours and fees.
 - (g) The services policies and procedures, required for Regulation 10, were kept in soft form in the service.
 - (h) The attendance records for each child were available and stored on a software application on a tablet in the service.

- (i) Details of the staff rosters were available in the service.
- (j) There was no administration of medication records completed to date, as the service only commenced operation in September 2023.
- (k) There were three records of accidents/incidents recorded on the software application on the tablet in the service, all of which contained the necessary particulars and had been witnessed and signed by staff and parents/guardians.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. Snack was provided at 10.15 am and consisted of bite size pieces of fruit, cheese, crackers, brioche and yogurt. Lunch was served at 11.45 and the child staying on until 3.00 pm was offered a hot lunch of pasta and ham, while the other two children who were going home at 12.30 pm were offered the remains of their morning snack box. Staff stated a further snack is offered at 2.00 pm and there was alternative food available in the fridge and in a box should children required it.
- Water was available at all times from individual water bottles that were located on a shelf nearby. Crockery and cutlery were available, if required.
- Nappy changing was observed to be carried out every two hours in line with the service's nappy changing policy. The staff member was heard chatting to the child during this time and using it as opportunity for one-to-one interaction.
- Children were observed wearing aprons during messy activities and spare clothes were available in the event of an accident.
- The weather on the day of inspection was cold and wet and the children were observed dressed in warm coats, hats and scarves. Waterproofs were available, if required.

- There was ample room for the children to move around freely and explore in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Details of the children’s daily activities, toileting and hot food were recorded on a software package and sent to parents/guardians in real time.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN’S RELATIONSHIPS:

- One of the adults sat with the children at snack time and engaged in social conversation, topics of interest included an annual toy show on the television in which the children were interested. The atmosphere was happy and relaxed.
- Staff working with the children were heard offering praise and encouragement when children were engaged in self-help skills. An example included when a child at the snack table was intent on opening a difficult cheese package, the child was so happy and wanted staff to share in their success when they were able to take off the first layer of wrapping.
- The children were supported to engage positively with each other in activities that required turn taking and sharing with staff heard intervening on a number of occasions to ensure that play experiences were positive for all of the children.
- Staff stated that informal meeting are held daily and was able to furnish the inspector with curriculum plans and notes from the last three months which included recording the children’s emergent interests.
- Communication with parents was observed at drop off and collection and staff stated they also use the software package to exchange information.
- Staff work in partnership with parents. An example of this was parents of prospective new children were observed being accommodated, on the day of inspection, in the service and were able to ask questions regarding the care and education of their child.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The classroom was laid in clearly defined areas providing playful opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all areas of development. Examples included shelving with arts and crafts materials that the children could easily access themselves and an easel for painting providing opportunities for endless creative activities. A well-resourced wooden kitchen, dolls, ponies and vehicles all offered scope for imaginative play and puzzles and construction materials enhanced opportunities for cognitive development.
- The layout of the room facilitated the staff to easily supervise the children as they moved between the areas.

- Suitable age and size appropriate tables and chairs were available for the children in the classroom.
- The toys and materials were accessible from baskets on shelves at the children’s height facilitating freedom of choice and encouraging independence.
- A number of areas were available outdoors providing a variety of experiences including the fairy and sensory gardens, ball court and the play area. The children had access to resources which encouraged gross motor skills including balance bikes, scooters, balls and hula hoops.

PROGRAMME OF ACTIVITIES:

- Observations of the children, linked to Aistear the curriculum framework, were furnished to the inspector via a software application on the service’s tablet. The observations were signed by parents on a monthly basis and staff stated these observations along with children’s emergent interests are used to inform planning.
- Staff were heard engaging children in one to one and groups discussions, songs and stories including the “Snow Garden” promoting the children’s language development.

Non-Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS:

- (1) A child at the snack table was observed eating a sponge cake with a chocolate filling, contrary to the service’s healthy eating policy. Foods which are high in fat and sugar are not recommended on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) The parent has been reminded of the service’s Healthy Eating Policy. Alternative options are available, if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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 external door of the service was secured with a thumb twist cylinder and a bolt and on the inside and a key lock on the outside. The two internal doors of the classroom were secured with a thumb twist cylinder preventing unauthorised adults from entering the service and children leaving unsupervised.
- The windows were located above adult height and were inaccessible to the children.
- The two blind cords in the classroom were secured with a hook, out of reach of the children.
- The indoor and outdoor toys were in good condition.
- Heavy shelving and storage units were secured to the walls.
- Radiators were fitted with covers protecting the children from the heat of the radiator.
- All flexes and cables were inaccessible by the children.
- Waste and recycling were stored in pedal operated bins in the classroom.
- Cleaning agents were secured with a child proof lock under the sink in the classroom.
- The kettle was stored under the sink in the classroom and secured with child proof lock.
- The outdoor play areas were secured: the ball court had high metal fencing and a high metal gate with a bolt, the fairy garden and sensory areas were secured with a stone wall and the river at the back of service was made inaccessible with metal fencing.

Infection Control:

- The wash hand basins were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water (40°C), dispensing soap, paper towels and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Staff were observed disinfecting tables with spray and sweeping the floor maintaining a safe and hygienic environment.
- Completed and up to date cleaning records were available for specific areas in the care room, sanitary areas and the outdoor play areas. These were recorded on a software package available on the service's digital device.
- Children's belongings were stored on hooks on the wall, off the main floor area.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original container, was available in a locked cupboard under the sink in the event of an emergency.

Safe Sleep:

- Opportunities for children to rest/sleep were provided in an area away from noisy activities. There were stackable beds with individual bed linen available, two foldable mats, cushions and a bean bag. Books were located on shelving in the area to facilitate children who wanted to rest or engage in quiet play.

Fire Safety:

- The two internal fire doors were unobstructed, aiding the quick evacuation of adults and children in the event of an emergency.
- The fire extinguisher was secured on the wall with brackets, ensuring it was readily accessible in the event of a fire emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- (1) A staff member who was observed changing a child's nappy was not wearing a disposable overall. In conversation the staff member stated they were aware that disposable aprons were available, in line with the service's nappy changing procedure, in order to protect clothing and prevent contamination.
- (2) The inspector observed that a child's hands were not washed after nappy changing contrary to the service's nappy changing procedure, posing a risk of cross contamination. Good hand hygiene is the most effective way of preventing the transmission of infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statement was received by the registered provider:

Infection Control:

- (1) (2) Staff have been reminded of the Nappy Changing Procedure.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- (1) (2) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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 fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 21 November 2023.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment. The Certificate was dated 28 March 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the wall beside the exit door of the classroom.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (b) The smoke alarm certificate expired on 21 November 2023 and there was no current certificate available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) (b) The smoke alarm service was carried out on 1 December 2023.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (1) (b) A copy of the smoke alarm certificate was received in the office of the inspectorate on 21 December 2023.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance, (1) (b), under Regulation 26 has been addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available with an expiry date of the 27 March which indicated that the service is insured for 24 Full Day care children, breakfast club and afterschool.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The service appeared to be of sound, stable structure and in good repair.
- (b) The service was observed to be safe and secure: both indoors and outdoors.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) The following was observed in the children's sanitary area with the fold down nappy changing unit;
 - (1) The temperature of the children's sanitary area was recorded at 14.4°C and there were no heating appliances available. In order to facilitate the care needs of the children the temperature of the room should be between 18°C and 22°C

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

- (c)
 - (1) A heater will be installed during the Christmas holidays.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c)

(1) The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance, (1) (c), under Regulation 29 has been addressed.