

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2023SO001

Name of Service: Sandcastles Quigabar

Address of Service: Parke, Enniscrone, Sligo, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F26 D710

Name of Registered Provider: Justina Reape

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 08/09/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Killeen
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
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Description of service

The preschool service is a sessional service registered for a maximum of 22 children aged 3-6 years. The premises is located outside the town of Enniscrone in county Sligo. The service operates from a newly built community GAA hall. The pre-school is located on the first floor of the community GAA hall and consists of one large playroom, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation for the children and staff. Full access to the football pitch and Astro turf is available during times of operation.

Staffing

The service employs five staff members, on the day of inspection, three staff members, including the person in charge, were working directly with the 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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11,23,25,26,27 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 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,*

(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.

(2)

On the day of inspection, three adults were present: the person in charge and two staff members employed to work directly with the children.

The following vetting information was available for seven adults:

- (a) Nine written validated references from past employers for five of the adults.
- (b) one written validated references from reputable sources for one of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five staff. However, 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)

Five of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service.

There were three adults working directly with fifteen children on the morning of the announced inspection

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

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:

- On arrival, the main entrance was found to be secured, effectively preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises. Visitors to the centre are required to use a call system to gain access which ensures additional safety
- A locked door with a high-reach button was installed on the door to the pre school room, effectively preventing children from leaving the premises and accessing the stairs.
- Waste was inaccessible to the children both indoors and outdoors.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- Children have access to a large, securely enclosed football pitch, surrounded by wire fencing to ensure safety. Additionally, there is an indoor astro turf area which is also securely maintained, providing further opportunities for physical activity in a safe environment.
- Grapes were observed to be cut in half, reducing the risk of choking to the child.
- No Low hanging wires were accessible to in any of the rooms.
- Storage facilities were kept inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment, both indoors and outdoors, were observed to be safe for the pre-school children using them and in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm running water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided in the sanitary accommodation.
- Aprons and gloves were available and observed in use by staff when changing of a child was required.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The tables were cleaned prior to snack time, with foods served to children on suitable plates.
- A refrigerator was available and utilised for the storage of perishable snacks and meals.
- Foot operated Pedal bins which were available in the pre-school room and sanitary area.
- Soap was readily available to children to wash their hands prior to eating, after both toileting and nappy changes. Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks. Handwashing was supervised by the adults to ensure all hands were cleaned effectively.

Administration of Medication:

- During staff interviews, it was evident that they were aware of their responsibilities regarding the safe administration of medication. A detailed care plan, signed by both the child's doctor and family, was available for one child who required medication. No medication was administered on the day of inspection. The medication was stored securely, in a location out of reach of children

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for five staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for one staff as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

A review of garda vetting for all staff took place in July 2025. A batch of re-newals were sent off to be re vetted. One staff member suffered a close family bereavement resulting in delay getting said staff member re vetted. In Future we will ensure enough time is given for potential delays in processing re vetting applications.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Renewed garda vetting send in.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has 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) (a) (b)

The service demonstrated that a staff held in date First Aid Responder (FAR) training and were always available to the children while in the service.

(2) (a) (b)

A fully stocked first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location in the service and available to the children as required.

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) A procedure was in place to practice and record monthly fire drills. The last documented fire drill was dated the 12th of June 2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service was on file last serviced 05/09/2025.
- (4)
Notices of the evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the room. Assembly point was clearly signposted and located adjacent to the football pitch.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

- On the day of inspection, children were appropriately always supervised by staff who were actively engaged and positioned to see and hear all children in their care.
- Transitions between activities, rest periods, and mealtimes were well-managed, ensuring children were never left unattended.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service from 27/08/2025 up until 27/03/2026.