

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025TY003
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Caterpillars Childcare
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Kilcommon National School, Churchquarter, Kilcommon, Co Tipperary
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<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 DK00
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Grainne Harte
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	03/12/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	2	PM	2
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

This full day care service was established in 2025 to provide care and education to children aged between 0 and 6 years old. A registered school age care service is also provided.

The service operates between 7.30am and 6pm, Monday – Friday for 40 weeks of the year. This includes a daily three-hour sessional service funded under the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE), for eligible children, that operates between 9am and 12pm for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is located in part of Kilcommon National school which was redeveloped for use as a pre-school service. The premises is a single storey, detached building in the village of Kilcommon in north Tipperary. The children have access to three activity rooms, a sleep room, sanitary accommodation area and an enclosed outdoor play area.

This is one of four Caterpillars Childcare services in north Tipperary, the other services are located in Newport, Rears Cross and Killeen. There is a fifth Caterpillars Childcare service in Co Laois.

### Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service on a daily basis but is available to call on when required and visits the service regularly. The service manager is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are four staff employed in the service and additional staff can be called on from the other Caterpillars Childcare services to provide relief when required. All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education.

### 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 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(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2), 19(1)(a), 23 and 25(1)(2).

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

(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 manager was the person in charge on a daily basis and there were named persons who could deputise when required.

(b) The service manager or her deputy were present in the service while it was in operation.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that all staff members were newly employed in this service which opened in September 2025, though some staff had been previously employed in other Caterpillars Childcare services. The staff files for the registered provider and four members of staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

- (a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working in the service.
- (b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.
- (c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting documentation was not required as none of the staff had lived outside of the state for a period of six consecutive months or longer.
- (4) Staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5, 8 or 9 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) There were two staff working directly with two children aged between 3 and 4 years old on the day of the inspection. The children attended on a full day care basis. The service manager was also available in the service.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was maintained at greater than the minimum requirements throughout the day.

## 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) The following was observed on the day of inspection through direct observation, review of records and discussions with staff.

#### Basic needs

The children were provided with meals, snacks and drinks throughout the day in line with the weekly menu plan. Children had access to their drink bottles which were refilled with water as required. The children brought their own morning snack. All other food was supplied by the service. Staff and children sat together at mealtimes.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement and choice both indoors and outdoors. The daily routine was balanced between indoor and outdoor activities.

There were cosy rest areas in each of the activity rooms where the children could rest and relax when they wanted to. These areas were furnished with padded floor mats and vinyl covered child sized sofas.

#### Supporting relationships

The staff were observed to be attentive to the children and available to them to support their play and exploration. The very favourable adult to child ratios ensured that staff were able to be responsive to the individual needs and desires of the children and to adapt or change planned activities accordingly.

The service produced a monthly newsletter which was sent to parents and a copy was displayed in the service. The newsletter detailed what the children had been engaged in that month, it welcomed new staff and recorded special celebrations such as birthdays, fund raising activities and 'Beep beep day'.

### Physical and material environment

The rooms were bright, comfortable, well-resourced and well laid out. Each room had a number of defined interest areas including art areas, puzzles and manipulative play areas, table-tops activity areas, home corner, construction areas and special interest areas.

The theme of the week was 'culture', which guided the activities of the week. On the day of inspection the staff had set up the lipped tray table on the theme of 'Italy' with sensory materials such as dried rice and play dough, figurines, painted flags, pots and plates. There were flags displayed in the corridor that the children had made earlier in the week.

### 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 accessed through a secured door in the front of the premises. The door was secured by an electro-magnetic locking system which prevented unauthorised access to the service and unsupervised exit from the service. There was a bell for visitors to alert staff to their presence.

The outdoor play area was enclosed by mesh fencing and a high gate to prevent children gaining unsupervised access to the roads around the school and to prevent unauthorised access to the outdoor area.

There was a soft fall surface covering the outdoor play area, including under and around the climbing equipment.

The service was a 'nut-free' environment as a precaution against potential nut allergies.

Hot water for hand washing was thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. Staff checked the water before children put their hands under it. Hot water was 29°C on the day of inspection.

##### Infection control:

The service had an infection prevention and control policy, including hand washing. Staff and children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times during the day such as before eating or handling food and after outdoor play, messy play or using the toilet.

##### Administration of medication:

The service had a policy on the administration of medication. None of the children were in receipt of medication on the day of inspection. Signed parental consent was sought prior to any medication being given to a child.

**Safe sleep:**

The service had a policy on safe sleep. The policy stated that children were monitored while they slept and a record was maintained of physical checks which were carried out every ten minutes. Neither of the children present on the day of inspection had a daytime sleep.

**Fire safety:**

Fire doors were kept clear of obstruction.

**Outing:**

The service had a policy on outings. The children were taken on outings in the village, walking to places of interest and on nature trails.

### 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 person in charge held current certification as a First Aid Response (FAR) valid until February 2026.

(2)(a) There were two suitably equipped first aid bags on a table in the corridor where they could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid bags were available if required by a child attending the service.