

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS043
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Name of Service:	Kilminchy School House
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Address of Service:	Dublin Road, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 TX33
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sonya Duggan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/07/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	22
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Church Avenue Tullamore Co Offaly R35K1W4
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn, F Carty
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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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).

Description of service

Kilminchy School House is one of two privately owned services operated by the registered provider in Co. Laois. The service offers full day care, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 1-6 years old. Opening hours are from 08:00am-18:00pm, Monday-Friday. The service operates from a two-storey premises located in the town of Portlaoise, Co. Laois. The service comprises of five preschool rooms. The toddler/wobbler, Caterpillars and Butterfly room and kitchen are located on the ground floor. The Afterschool room and Playroom, two sleep rooms and an office are located on the first floor. The toddler/Wobbler room, Caterpillar room and Butterfly room were in operation on the day of inspection. An outdoor play area is located to the front and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs thirteen staff to work in the service. The registered provider works directly with the children and was present during the inspection. The person in charge facilitated 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

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1)(a)(b),(c) (2) (a)(b)(c)(d), (4) – Management and recruitment,
- Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- Regulation 15 – Record of preschool service,
- Regulation 16 – Record in relation to preschool service,
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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 inspectors wish 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.*

(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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

The staff members were aware of the management structure, the lines of authority and their roles within the service. Photographs and names of the person in charge, deputy person in charge and staff were displayed on a notice board in the entrance hall.

(2)

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Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that five new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 17 July 2025. The staff files of the five newly employed staff members were reviewed and the following was noted;

- (a)
Eight written validated references were available from a previous employer.
- (b)
Two written validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the five new staff members. In regard to all staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
Police vetting was available for two new staff members who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)
Records were available evidencing that the five new staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

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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)
An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children on the day of inspection. On arrival at the service, there were 27 children being supervised directly by six adults. In the afternoon, there were 22 children being supervised directly by six adults. The person in charge was available to support in the rooms if required.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of inspection demonstrated by the following observation;

Morning

- There were two adults providing direct care to six children aged between 1-2 and a half years in the Wobbler/Toddler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to ten children aged between 2-4 years in the Caterpillar room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to eleven children aged between 3-5 years in the Butterfly room.

Afternoon

- There were two adults providing direct care to six children aged between 1-2 and a half years in the Wobbler/Toddler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to seven children aged between 2-4 years in the Caterpillar room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to nine children aged between 3-5 years in the Butterfly room.

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(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises duration the operational hours of the service. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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

A sample of 12 records were reviewed. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above regulation for all the records reviewed.

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)
The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1) (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g).
- (h)
The attendance records of children were recorded at the time of children entering and leaving the service and were available for review.
- (i)
The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.
- (j)
A sample of 12 written records of medication administration was available for review. All records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.
- (k)

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A sample of 12 accident and incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by a staff member, the person in charge and a parent and were completed appropriately.

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

Parents provide the morning and afternoon snack for their children. The service provides a hot lunch and tea. The main hot meal served on the day of inspection was chicken curry, rice and mixed vegetables. Children's dietary requirements were supported and vegetarian options were provided. Children were offered additional portions. Individual water bottles were located in designated water stations in each room for children to access freely throughout the day. Children in the Toddler/Wobbler room wore bibs to protect their clothing during mealtimes. Younger children's hands and faces were cleaned with individual wash cloths following meals.

Children in the Caterpillar room were engaged in tabletop activities such as of a group painting activity and building with blocks. Children in the Butterfly room were observed engaged in a reading and yoga. Children from each preschool room were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play throughout the day.

Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis and more frequently if required. Older children accessed the toilet independently and with supervision.

Supporting Relationships

Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during interactions. Family walls, 'Our Class Birthday' and Community walls displayed photographs of the preschool children, their families and the local area. This helped the children feel connected to home and their community. Babies and younger children were observed being held and cuddled by staff and any child that became upset or

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unsettled was immediately attended to and reassured. The children's independence was supported in the Caterpillar room as they were encouraged to tidy up their play equipment and wash their hands before eating lunch. Verbal updates were provided to parents and carers at drop off and collection times.

Physical and Material Learning Environment

Each preschool room had low-level shelving that displayed materials and equipment such as baskets of magnetic tiles, vehicles, wooden puzzles and Montessori equipment. Other equipment included musical instruments, dolls and prams, and arts and crafts materials. A couch in the toddler/wobbler room provided a comfortable rest area for children to take a break from activities and rest on the couch. Interest areas such as a low wooden climbing frame in the toddler room was available for small children to climb on. Children had access to an outdoor play area throughout the day where their gross motor development was supported. Outdoor climbing equipment, footballs, slides and tunnels were available to the children.

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 gate was secured and controlled with an electromagnetic lock and keypad entry system. Access into the premises was controlled by staff by a video monitor whereby staff could release the gate lock from inside the service. This system prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.

Cleaning products were stored safely on high shelves out of reach of children.

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

Infection Control:

Liquid hand soap and paper towels were provided at sinks to support hygienic hand washing.

Bed linen for cots and low-level beds were stored in baskets individually labelled for each child who required a sleep.

A fridge was available in the entrance hall and the kitchen for the safe storage of perishable foods provided from

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home contained within lunch boxes.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not required to be administered to any child on the day of inspection. The staff informed the inspectors that no child in the service was on specific medication requiring a care plan.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Children aged between 1 and 2 years old from the Wobbler/Toddler and Caterpillar rooms were provided with a cot to sleep in. Older children age 2 years and above from the Caterpillar room slept on low level beds. Two sleep rooms were located upstairs; one had four cots and the second had three. The temperature in the sleep rooms was recorded between 19.3°C –21.9°C. Sleep checks were conducted by the staff every 10 minutes and recorded on a log.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were easily recognisable and unobstructed. A fire exit route was provided from the sleep room located on the first floor via an external staircase leading down to the garden below. All fire exits were clear from obstruction. The fire assembly point was located at the back of the premises.

Outing:

Staff advised that annual outings occur to Castleview Farm. An outings policy and risk assessment were in place for outings.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Handwashing practices in the Wobbler/Toddler room were inadequate to control the spread of infection. Staff did not wash their hands after nappy changes. Children were not brought to wash their hands before eating their meals, following outdoor play or after nappy changes.
2. The disposable gloves used for nappy changing were not suitable. The gloves in use were not the required powder-free synthetic vinyl or latex gloves. The gloves were ineffective for infection control.
3. A communal hand towel was in use in the downstairs sanitary accommodation used by the children from the Toddler/Wobbler room and Caterpillar room. Children and staff were observed to dry their hands with the towel. This presented a risk of cross contamination.
4. A swing lid bin was in use in the Toddler/Wobbler room for the disposal of tissues. Foot operated pedal bins are required for the disposal of waste contaminated waste items.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. All staff have been reminded that they must wash their hands as well as children's hands immediately after every nappy change/toileting, and after outdoor play. Refresher training on infection control and hand hygiene was completed by all staff. Staff have been provided with the hand-washing policy as a reminder and signed the policy. Verbal warning given to staff as our policy was not adhered to on this occasion. Daily observations are being conducted by management of handwashing practices in the service.
2. Powder free vinyl gloves have been purchased. Polythene embossed gloves are no longer in use. Large stock of powder free synthetic latex and vinyl gloves in stock.
3. Paper hand towels constantly checked in all hand towel dispensers. Staff and children have been reminded to use these and dispose of appropriately after use. Communal hand towel removed from bathroom. Management will regularly check sanitary accommodation.
4. Foot operated pedal bin has been placed in the Toddler Room. Children and staff have been shown and reminded to use appropriately. Swing lid bins have been removed from setting.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photograph of box of new vinyl gloves, stocked paper hand towel dispenser and pedal bin.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.