

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LS065
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Name of Service:	The Rainbow Castle Ltd.
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Address of Service:	41 Blossom Court, Esker Hills, Portlaoise, Co. Laois
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Eircode:	R32 KW29
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Name of Registered Provider:	Honorata Puslednik
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	30/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore Co. Offaly
Inspection undertaken by:	R Flynn
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

The Rainbow Castle Ltd offers full day and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. Children currently enrolled in the service range between age 1-6 years. The service is operated by an independent provider, between 08:00am to 6.00pm Monday to Friday. The service operates from a single-story purpose-built building located in a residential area of Portlaoise, Co Laois. Five pre-school rooms, a school aged room, a kitchen, two sleep rooms, an office and a reception area are provided. The wobbler room, Playgroup and the Orange room were operational on the 30 June 2026. Outdoor play areas are located at the back and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered employer employs fifteen staff to work in the service. Twelve staff were working in the service on the day of inspection including nine childcare staff, one cook, and the person in charge and deputy person in charge who were not assigned to care rooms but available to provide support if required. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under,

- Regulation 9 (2)(a)(b)(c), (4) - Management and recruitment.

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- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise. The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability, this information was also displayed in the entrance hall of the service.

(2)

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Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that eight new staff members had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 01 July 2025. The staff files of the eight newly employed childcare staff were reviewed and the following was noted;

- (a)
Thirteen written validated references were available from a previous employer.
- (b)
Three written validated references were available from a source other than a previous employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eight new staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice in regard to one staff member, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)
Police vetting was available for one newly employed staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)
Eight new childcare staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 and 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be the equivalent.

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.

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(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. In the morning on arrival at the service, there were twenty one children being supervised directly by nine adults. In the afternoon, there were twenty-three children being supervised by eight adults. The person in charge and deputy person in charge were also available in the service to assist in 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 three adults providing direct care to six children aged between 1-2 years old in the Wobbler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to five children aged between 2-3 years old in Playgroup.
- There were four adults providing direct care to ten children aged between 3- 4 years in the Orange room.

Afternoon

- There were three adults providing direct care to seven children aged between 1-2 years old in the Wobbler room.
- There were two adults providing direct care to five children aged between 2-3 years old in Playgroup.
- There were three adults providing direct care to eleven children aged between 3- 4 years in the Orange room.

(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.

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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

The morning snack and afternoon snack was provided by the service and consisted of a variety of fruit, yoghurts, soda bread and rice cakes. Dinner was provided by parents and reheated by the kitchen staff. Children in the Wobbler room sat in highchairs and low tables to eat their meals and wore bibs to protect their clothing. Children in the Wobbler room were assisted by staff when required. Individual water bottles were accessible to children in each room throughout the inspection and children were given a drink with their meal. Children in Playgroup were observed to sit together at low tables with staff and eat their meals. Staff in Playgroup were observed to also eat their snacks with the children during mealtimes and engage in conversation with the children.

Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely, and a positive experiences for the children. Staff interacted with the children, telling them they were going to have their nappy changed, and engaging in conversation during the nappy change.

Individual bottles of suncream were available and labelled with each child's name.

Sleep practice observed on the day of inspection was child led. Babies in the Wobbler room slept when they needed and were allowed sleep as long as they required. Older pre-school children from Playgroup were facilitated with a scheduled rest in the afternoon if required. Children who did not require a sleep, were accommodated in the preschool room where staff were observed participating in tabletop activities with the children.

Supporting relationships

The children were observed engaged and active as they chose between activities, for example participating in artwork and engaging in free play in the care rooms. Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Interactions such as active listening, questioning, giving praise and reassurance were used. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during interactions observed. Children in the Orange room were observed having a disco with staff, dancing around the preschool room to music. Children in Playgroup sat at tables with staff

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engaged in a craft activity colouring in suitcases, discussing and planning what they would need to pack for a holiday. A photograph of each child was placed above low-level hooks in the hallway for their coats and bags. The staff advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the service are given to parents at drop off and collection times. Individual record books were maintained for each child which went home in children's bags each day and detailed the children's meals, sleep and toileting.

Physical and material environment

Children in the Wobbler room were observed to enjoy a variety of developmentally appropriate play equipment such as a toy train, steering wheel, toy piano, hoop stackers and small wooden blocks. The Wobbler room had soft colourful vinyl matting laid out in the corner to provide a play area for small children to crawl, climb and move around freely. The Wobbler sleep room had an armchair for staff to sit on when bottle feeding or providing comfort to a child.

The pre-school rooms had a range of play-based equipment. This included art equipment, paper and crayons, baskets of jigsaws and puzzles. Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions which were observed during the inspection. A range of books were available in the reading areas of each preschool room. The Orange room had a reading nook with soft matting to sit and take a break from activities.

Each outdoor play area was well resourced. All children on the day of inspection were observed to spend time outside in the garden. A variety of shaded areas were located throughout the garden such as trees, playhouses and a gazebo providing children with shelter from the sun. Push along equipment, low slides and rocking horses were provided for smaller children. Water and sand tables were in each garden area for messy and sensory play. Energetic play was accommodated in the large garden predominantly used by the older children from the Orange room, which included a low climbing dome, slides, wooden climbing frames with playhouses and footballs. A shock resistant surface was present under the climbing frame.

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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 door to the service was secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. A bell entry system at the entrance door was managed by staff with a release lock button inside the service.

Cleaning products and hazardous materials 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.

The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.

Infection Control:

Liquid hand soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from wall mounted dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play, before meals and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available in each preschool room and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation. The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

Staff advised that no child was on medication or a specific care plan. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the kitchen out of reach of the children. No medication was administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate sleep equipment was used for children who required sleep. Children aged under 2 years old were provided with a cot while older children slept on low level beds. Sleeping children were physically monitored at 10-minute intervals throughout the service and written records of these checks were maintained. The Wobbler sleep room temperature was recorded between 20.9° and 21.3°. The Playgroup sleep room temperature was recorded as 21.9°C.

Fire Safety:

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Fire exits located in each preschool room led to individual outdoor areas, and were clear of obstruction and clearly marked. A fire assembly point was located in the outdoor play area to the back of the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

An updated Garda Vetting was obtained for the staff member. To ensure this does not happen again the person in charge will be regularly check all staff Garda Vetting to ensure they are always in date.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Copy of Garda Vetting viewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance 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)

Four staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the operational hours of the service.

(2)(a)

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A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school service.

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)

A written record was available of fire drills completed in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 10 June 2026.

(b)

Records were kept of the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system. The firefighting equipment last serviced on 31 August 2025. The smoke detection system was last serviced on 21 July 2026.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed at doorways throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for 80 children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2027.