

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC500
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Name of Service:	Sandcastles
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Address of Service:	White's Cross GAA Grounds, Upper Glanmire, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T23 EY42
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Cashman
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	06/08/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	9
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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

Sandcastles is a full day care service, that accommodates children aged 2 to 6 years. Children attending sessional and part-time care are also facilitated, including children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. Opening hours are from 7.30am to 5.00pm, each Monday to Friday and the setting is also registered to cater for school age children.

Located on the grounds of White's Cross GAA Club, in Glanmire, Co Cork, the service operates from two adjacent prefabricated cabins. The original cabin includes a spacious care room, referred to as the Butterflies room, children's sanitary facilities, a kitchen and an entrance area. The second prefabricated cabin consists of one care room, referred to as the Caterpillars room, which has adjoining children's sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor play area is accessible from each of the cabins.

Staffing

There were eight adults attached to the service on day of inspection. This included the registered provider, four early years educators, one relief early years educator and two school age staff.

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.

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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, 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.*

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(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 service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service. This was identified through review of staff rota and staff sign in records.

(2) Four adults had commenced employment at the service since the previous inspection on 23 April 2024. This included two early years educators and two school age staff. Recruitment records in respect of these adults were therefore examined. It was also identified that one Garda vetting disclosure was due for renewal, this was also open to inspection.

(a) Of the eight references required, seven validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the eight references required, one validated reference was available from an alternative source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all adults with direct access to children. 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 the report.

(d) Police vetting was deemed not to be required for any of the new adults working in the service.

(3) The registered provider ensured to carry out all checks and validations mentioned in (9) (2) prior to the adults commencing in the service.

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(4) The two new adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation. Both the Butterflies and Caterpillars room were mixed throughout the morning and allowed for the children to move from one room to the other.

- In the Butterflies and Caterpillars room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 16 early years children, aged between 2 years and 6 months and 5 years. In addition to this, 1 adult was present with 12 school age children. In the afternoon there were two staff present with nine early years children. In addition to this, one adult was present with three school age children.

(8) Following review of the staff roster, it was evident that at least two adults were present on the premises at all times.

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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

Basic needs:

- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the session.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills such as putting on their own coat and wet gear and zipping it up. Staff were available to support children if required.
- Parents/guardians provided a mid-morning snack which consisted of sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.
- Children had access to additional clothing in the event it was required.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Staff used positive reinforcement language with the children.
- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.
- Staff were observed meeting with parents throughout the day, updating them on the activities of the day. The staff explained to the inspector that they communicate regularly with the parents, this occurs at collection and drop-off times.
- During mealtime staff sat at the table and engaged in social conversations with the children.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service ensured there was adequate equipment available for the number of children attending the service. The service had additional toys and materials on the premises. It was observed on day of inspection that the service provided a number of sensory activities including water play, sand play and modelling dough.

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 internal and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment observed appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Blind cords were secured and out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- All perishable foods were stored in the refrigerator.
- Appropriate water temperatures were recorded in each room and sanitary facility. The water temperature ranged from 19.1°C to 31.0°C.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables and chairs between activities and prior to mealtimes.
- Foot operated bins were available in the room and sanitary facilities.
- Regular handwashing was conducted throughout the day. This was observed when staff and children entered the premises, after outdoor play, after toileting and before snack.
- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.

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Administration of medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Discussion with staff ensured staff were aware of the correct process for administering medication in the event it was required.
- All medication observed on the day was in date and out of reach of children.

Safe sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping on day of inspection. Sleep equipment observed on the day appeared in good condition.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified in the room.
- Fire equipment was available in the room in the event they were needed.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection control:

2. During a routine nappy change, it was observed that the child's hands were not washed after the nappy changing procedure. This posed a risk of infection to the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. Garda vetting was applied for, and a disclosure has been received for the staff member. The service has put reminders in place on mobile devices and put up a sign in the office with staff member's renewal dates.

Infection control:

2. Staff were reminded of the hand-washing procedure, and a reminder sign has been put up in the nappy changing area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosure was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Infection control:

2. Photographic evidence was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that staff checked in and out each child attending the service. This was completed through the use of the service's roll books. This was observed to be regularly completed throughout the day.

(3)

(a) The person in charge ensured that no person other than a child attending the service, the person dropping or collecting the child, staff or unpaid worker could enter the premises without being approved.

(b) A daily record of persons entering the premises was kept onsite and was available to the inspector.

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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) The service had maintained a record on the following:
- (a) Each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill was July 2026.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The last recorded service date was 26 April 2026.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the service.

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

It was evident throughout the day of inspection that children are supervised at all times, this was observed by staff engaging in supervision by sight and sound. Staff supported children when required. This was observed both indoors and outdoors.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required*

Compliance Information

(b) The premises were observed to be safe and secure. There were no observable defects in the buildings.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) On the day of inspection, the inspector observed the following which posed a risk of safety to the children:

- The light in the children's sanitary facility in the Butterflies room was broken and not working.
- The press under the sink in the children's sanitary facility in the Butterflies room was broken and observed to be loose.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The light and press under the sink in the children's sanitary facility in the Butterflies room were fixed following the inspection. The registered provider was aware these needed to be fixed and will monitor the repairs going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the repairs was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliances identified under Regulation 29 have been adequately addressed.