

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC283		
Name of Service:	Naíonra Bhaile Mhistéala Teoranta		
Address of Service:	Clós Bhunscoil na Toirbhirte, Baile Mhistéala, Co Cork		
Eircode:	P67 FE82		
Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Nic Carthaigh		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	04/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick, V35 XT5F		
Inspection undertaken by:	S O' Brien		
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	N/A		

Description of service

Naíonra Bhaile Mhistéala Teoranta is a play based, sessional, community service in operation since 1997. The service caters for children aged 2 to 6 years, facilitating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service operates from 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. The service is located within the grounds of Bunscoil na Toirbhirte national school, in the town of Mitchelstown, Co Cork. The service consists of two care rooms with sanitary facilities for the children and staff. The service has direct access to a large astro turf area located in front of the service which is also shared with the national school.

Staffing

The service employs four adults to work directly with the children. The registered provider is not based in the service. On the day of inspection, one adult and a volunteer were present.

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

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.

(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 had a designated person in charge within the service.
- (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2) Five recruitment files were reviewed including the file of the volunteer.

- (a) Two of the 10 references were from a past employer and were validated.
- (b) Eight of the 10 references were from an alternative source and were validated.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the five adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required for any of the five adults, as they had not lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.

(4) The person in charge working directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(4)

1. One adult working directly with the children did not hold a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister. Therefore, there were not sufficient adults that held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education, working directly with the children during the inspection. This posed a possible risk to the children's wellbeing.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

The registered provider stated in their response that some staff members who held a relevant qualification were unavailable to attend work on the day of inspection.

Preventive Action

The registered provider stated in their response that qualified staff will be available in the future. If not, the service will reduce the adult to child ratio appropriately. The service has also updated their staffing, recruitment and management policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documented evidence was submitted to the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider response and supporting documentation was reviewed and has met the regulatory requirements.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were adequate adults to care for the children in attendance in the service during the inspection.

(3) On arrival to the service, there were 13 children aged between 3 and 5 years of age being cared for by 2 adults.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1) Accident and incident records from 02 February 2023 to 04 December 2024 were assessed and were observed to be complete and contained the relevant information.

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 children were observed freely moving around the room, partaking in free play when the inspector arrived at the service.

- The children spent time in the outdoor area of the service during the inspection.
- Children were observed washing their hands after outdoor play and before snack time. The adults were available to support the children if needed while also promoting independence and self-help skills.
- Snacks were provided by the children's parents and guardians. Meat sandwiches, cheese, fruit, vegetables and yoghurts were observed in the children's lunch boxes.
- Individual water bottles were freely available to the children throughout the inspection.
- A tee-pee tent was available to the children in the care room as a rest area if needed.
- Staff were aware of the individual needs of the children and were observed adapting activities to ensure the inclusion of all children.

Supporting relationships

- The adults were observed sitting with the children during activities and snack time. The atmosphere in the service was observed to be relaxed and allowed the children time to play and enjoy their snack.
- The adults were observed listening to the children's voices and valued each child's opinion.
- The staff promoted a sense of identity and belonging. For example, during circle time, the adults spoke about the family members of the children.
- The person in charge outlined that the service has a strong relationship with the national school on the grounds and expressed how the children in the service are involved in activities taking place in the school. The person in charge also outlined how this relationship supports the children's transition from preschool to national school.

Programme of activities

- On arrival to the service, the children were observed playing with jigsaws. Other children were observed partaking in imaginary play with open ended materials such as a cardboard box.
- The children were observed singing songs during circle time and also speaking about a picture that the adults showed the children of a beach.
- The children were observed taking part in roleplay during circle time.
- The children were observed running, jumping and playing games in the outdoor area that promoted physical movement.
- The children were observed playing with plastic blocks during a tabletop activity.

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 to the service, the main entrance door to the service was secured. This prevented any child from exiting the service unsupervised or any person gaining unauthorised access to the service.
- The person in charge ensured that the gate in the outdoor area was secured before the children entered the area. During the inspection the outdoor area was observed to be a safe and secure space for the children.
- Blind cords were observed to be secured and out of reach to the children, during the inspection.
- All toys and equipment observed were in good condition on inspection.
- On inspection, all cables were observed to be out of reach to children.

Infection control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were available to the children and adults in the sanitary areas.
- Children were observed washing their hands before snack and after outdoor play.
- The appropriate waste bins for waste disposal were available in the sanitary areas and main care room.
- Perishable food items from the children's lunches were stored in a refrigerator to prevent food spoilage.

Fire safety:

- During the inspection, the fire exits were observed to be free from obstruction.

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 service had an attendance record book that recorded each child being checked in and out on a daily basis.

(3)

(a) The person in charge requested the inspector to check in and out on arrival and departure to the service.

(b) A written record was kept in the attendance record book of the entry of any persons to the service.

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 that the preschool service was adequately insured for a maximum of 22 preschool children at any one time. The insurance policy commenced on 01 September 2024 and expired on 31 August 2025.