

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC290
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Naíonra Droichead na Banndan
-------------------------	------------------------------

Address of Service:	An Bothar Nua, Palún C.L.G., Páirc Uí Mhurthile, Droichead na Banndan, Co. Cork
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	P72 HF53
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Máirín Uí Chriáin
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	19/09/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O' Reilly
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 Droichead na Banndan is a long-established early years service. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 44 children aged from 2 to 6 years. At time of inspection the service was catering for children from 2 years 8 months to 6 years offering a morning and afternoon sessional service to the children attending and including the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 09:00 to 12:00 hours and from 12:15 to 15:15 hours Monday to Friday.

The service is co-located in the GAA facility of Bandon town and is based in two rooms on the first floor over the GAA hall. The children have access to the GAA community hall and a designated secured outdoor play area is located beside the building within the GAA grounds.

Staffing

The 7 staff included the registered provider/person in charge and a deputy. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. There were two students on a first and third-year college placement.

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.

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, deputy, staff student 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 named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider/ person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2) Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 9 adults, this included the registered provider and two student placements. The following records were available for the 9 adults:

(a) Of the required 18 references, 10 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining 8 references, were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 9 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Two police vetting records were on file for the two staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 7 staff members had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education, or evidence of a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent, as listed 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.

(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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(3)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

Seomra 1

There were 20 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 6 years present in the sessional service with 3 staff in attendance at all times. The adult child ratio was correct.

Seomra 2

There were 13 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 6 years present in the sessional service with 2 staff and 1 student in attendance at all times. The adult child ratio was correct.

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;*

- l 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;*
- l 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

(1)(a) to (i)

A sample of 11 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (a) to (i) inclusive.

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

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious. The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults, for example, the opening of lunch boxes and cartons.
- Staff were observed assisting the children with hand washing and drying. Staff were observed assisting and encouraging independent dressing prior to playing outdoors and when going home. Child height hooks were available to encourage independent dressing. The children were observed waiting their turn, sharing the experience, which fostered the children's confidence in communicating in a group setting and promoted socialisation.

- There was adequate space in the two rooms to accommodate a variety of play activities. A mixture of adult led play and child directed play was facilitated during indoor and outdoor play.
- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was maintained with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were familiar with the daily routine. Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills while playing indoors and outdoors.

Physical and Material Environment

- The service was clean, bright, child friendly and well maintained and the openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- The layout of the rooms promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- The rooms were laid out in defined interest areas. This included a home corner, small world, transport, construction area, playhouse, dolls, arts/crafts, role play for example hairdressers/fireman/nurses, and puzzles were available in both rooms.
- A quiet corner was in place to facilitate quiet time. This quiet corner was equipped with a soft rug, child sized seating and books. Children's artwork, family wall and birthday wall were on display.
- There was a variety of materials and defined interest areas in the outdoor area, including a wooden framed climbing wall with an enclosed seating area underneath. A large sand unit off the ground at child height with lots of accompanying play equipment for example, handheld play diggers, funnels, spades and buckets. A number of swings, large and small, a playhouse and a climbing frame with slide and a second enclosed seating area for the children if they wanted to sit and rest for a while. The outdoor area created a challenging, diverse, creative, and enriching experiences for the children. The children were observed playing outdoors in group and singular play closely supervised by staff.
- The children had access to an outdoor toilet for the uninterrupted use of the outdoors as a learning environment to promote children's physical activity and skills of teamwork, cooperation, creativity, and imagination.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children's parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle. Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables. Water was the preferred drink option.

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 the inspector's arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use, to prevent the unauthorised access of a person or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- As the service is located on the first floor of the building. There were windows fitted with restrictors but could be opened safely to ventilate the care rooms.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelves or in cupboards with a child proof lock on the cupboard door.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children's reach in the playrooms in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with a high fencing and a gate with a lock at adult height.

Infection Control:

- Suitable handwashing facilities was available in the playroom and in the children's and adult toilet facilities. Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place. Recorded water temperatures in the wash hand basins in the children's toilets was 28°C on day of inspection.

- Supervised handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack, after toileting and messy play. Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and corresponding cleaning records were available to review.
- A fridge was available in each care room to store perishable foods (snacks) provided by the children's respective parents and guardians.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions and the emergency lighting of the fire exit signs were illuminated.

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 registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that three staff members held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid boxes were safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid boxes were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) The fully equipped first aid boxes were available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 06 June 2025. The service was closed for July and August. Management plan on completing a fire drill in the next few days for September, when the children are well settled into the service.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on the 18 August 2025 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 28 July 2025.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in 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 the service was adequately insured, with insurance for a maximum of 48 children until 31 August 2026.