

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC300
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Thomáis Dáibhís
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Address of Service:	c/o Máire Uí Bhriain, F/Ch CLG, Carrigoon, Mallow, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P51 XV58
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Name of Registered Provider:	Máire Uí Bhriain
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM	N/A
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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).

Conditions if applicable	N/A
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Description of service

Naíonra Thomáis Dáibhís is a private sessional service in operation since 1987. While the service is registered for both a morning and afternoon session, only the three morning sessions, from 8.45am to 12.15pm, 9.00am to 12.00pm and 9.15am to 12.15pm were in operation on the day of inspection. It is open 38 weeks of the year and is registered to accommodate children from 2 to 6 years of age, presently children who attend are aged from 2 years 8 months to 6 years old. The service operates through the medium of Irish. The service is located in the rural area of Carrigoon on the outskirts of Mallow town. It operates from three rooms within Mallow GAA Sports Complex. The service has adult and child sanitary facilities and children have access to both indoor and outdoor play areas. There is a large car park available at the front of the service.

Staffing

There were 14 adults in total attached to the service including 2 Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support Workers, the registered provider, two contractor workers, eight early years educators and one student.

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, deputy persons 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) The service had a designated person in charge and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.

(b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge and early years educators.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that seven new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Seven of these new staff members work directly with the children. On the day of inspection, one student was present on an educational work placement programme, and two contractors were providing activities to the children. A total of seven files were reviewed. In addition, Garda vetting for three staff members whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.

(a) Of the 14 references required, 12 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 14 references required, 2 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for one of the seven new adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the adult.

(4) The 11 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.

(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 an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.

(3) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.

- In the Seomra Dearg room there were 2 staff working with 19 children, aged between 3 years and 5 years, all attending sessional care.
- In the Seomra Gorm room there were 2 staff working with 19 children, aged between 3 years and 2 months and 4 years and 10 months, all attending sessional care.
- In the Seomra Buí room there were 3 staff working with 21 children, aged between 3 years and 11 months and 5 years, all attending sessional care. One student was also present in the room.

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:

- Children had access to their water bottles throughout the session.
- Parents/guardians provided a mid-morning snack for children attending the service on a sessional basis. Snacks included rolls, wraps, fruit and yoghurts.
- The children were observed independently accessing the sanitary areas. The staff were available to provide assistance, if required.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were asking children what jobs they wanted to complete on the day and children voiced their own interests such as collecting all the dinosaurs, cleaning the tables and picking up toys from the floor.
- Children were encouraged in developing their independence skills for example; putting their own coats and shoes on and staff supported children when required.
- Staff spoke at the child's level in a calm, soothing tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.
- Staff spoke through Irish to the children and encouraged children to feel confident in speaking Irish back to staff.
- The service worked in partnership with the parents and guardians of the children attending. Parents/Guardians were welcomed into the service to discuss concerns and remained updated with the children's development during their sessions. Parents and guardians were updated electronically through a messaging application, updates were also displayed on a notice board in the main entrance area and staff would communicate verbally at drop off and collection times.

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 provides a number of sensory activities including water play, sand play and play 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 main entrance to the service was secured with an electromagnetic lock and keypad, which reduced the risk of unauthorised entry of an adult or the unsupervised exit by a child.
- The release button to exit the main entrance door was out of reach for children and limited the risk of a child leaving the premises unaccompanied.
- All emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction.
- Blind cords were secured and out of reach of children.

Infection control:

- All perishable foods were stored in the refrigerator.
- Water temperatures were recorded in each room and sanitary facility. The water temperature ranged from 31.5°C to 38.9°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.

Administration of medication:

- Anti-febrile medication was observed to be in date, stored in its original container, and inaccessible to the children in a locked cupboard.

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. The electrical cables attached to the portable television in the Seomra Buí were not secured and out of reach of children. This posed a risk of injury to the children in the care room.
2. The storage press under the sink in the Seomra Gorm children's sanitary facilities was not safely secured. The children had access to bathroom cleaning products. This posed a safety risk to the children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

1. The television electric cables were safely secured out of reach of children. A staff meeting was conducted following the inspection, regular safety checks will be completed by staff going forward.
2. The storage press under the sink was secured and the manager of the service had requested to keep the press empty. Following the staff meeting, this press had been added to the safety checklist to be completed by staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the secured electric cables and minutes of the staff meeting was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence of the secured storage press and minutes of the staff meeting was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

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

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) Regular monthly fire drills were documented in each room, the most recent fire drills were completed by each room in December 2025.
 - (b) A list, which details the number and type of firefighting equipment was maintained on file. The records indicated that the smoke detection system and fire alarm system was serviced in July 2025 and the firefighting equipment was serviced in July 2025.
 - (4) The fire evacuation procedure, outlining details of the steps to be followed in the event of a fire, were displayed in various locations throughout the premises. The fire assembly points were clearly signposted.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) The children's and adults sanitary facilities are maintained in a suitable condition. The hot water supply is thermostatically controlled to remain under 43 °C. There were an adequate number of children's and adults bathrooms and wash hand basins for the number of children attending. Nappy changing facilities were suitable to the age and needs of the children.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) The adult cistern was noted to be constantly streaming water, posing a risk of flooding. In conversation, staff stated that this had been an ongoing issue.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The cistern has been fixed by building management. Regular checks will be completed by staff to ensure the sanitary facility is safely working.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the working cistern has been forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

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