

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC388
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Name of Service:	Múin Pre School - The Rockies
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Address of Service:	Blackrock National Hurling Club, Church Road, Blackrock, Blackrock, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 E33C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kate Gaffney, Clodagh Barrett
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Service type:	Sessional, Part time
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Date of Inspection:	24/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	3
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Administration Office, St. Mary's Health Campus, Gurranabraher, Cork. T23X440.
Inspection undertaken by:	D Cotter
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Múin Pre School The Rockies is as a part time service that provides care to children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. There is one care room that is situated on the first floor at Blackrock National Hurling Club which is a detached 2 storey building located in a residential urban setting. The children's and adult toilet facilities are positioned off the corridor alongside the room. Children have access to an outdoor area within the grounds. The service operates a sessional service from 9:00am to 12:00pm and the part time service operates from 09:00am to 2:00pm.

Staffing

There are seven adults attached to the service including the two registered providers who are not service based. On the morning of the inspection, there were three adults at the premises, and two of these were working directly with the children.

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 -

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(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 registered providers have ensured that there is a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge as well as the deputy person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection. The roster for the service demonstrated that at least one of these people were always on site.

2.

There were seven staff attached to the service and seven staff files were assessed.

(a) Ten of the fourteen references were available from a past employer and had been validated.

(b) Four of the fourteen references were available and validated from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all for staff. 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 required, and available for two of the staff as they had resided outside of the state for a period of longer than six months.

4.

Five staff members held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. One staff member held a letter of qualification recognition from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality. One of the registered providers, who did not work directly with the children, did not require a qualification.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

On the day of inspection, the following policies were examined:

- Healthy eating policy.

The above policy was observed to contain the relevant details to meet regulatory compliance.

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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children.

2.

The ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations.

In the morning, there were two staff available in the care room to work directly with the 15 children in attendance, aged between 3 and 5 years.

In the afternoon, there were three staff available in the care room to work directly with the three children in attendance, aged between 3 and 5 years.

8.

The registered provider has ensured that there were a minimum of two staff at all times on the premises. This was evidenced through the staff sign in and out sheets and through discussion with staff on the day.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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's toileting needs were attended to promptly and staff assisted children when necessary.
- Staff responded to children in low tones and communicated with them respectfully throughout the inspection.
- It was evident through observation on the day of inspection that children's voices were listened to, and children were able to communicate their needs to attentive adults. For example, during outdoor play, two children went to play alone. When approached by a staff member, the child stated, "we just want to be left alone". The staff member then informed the children that they could join back in at a later time and left the two children to play together away from the larger group.
- Staff followed the interests of the children and evidence of this was visible in the service.
- The children were observed freely moving around the care rooms partaking in activities of choice.
- The room was well laid out to encourage the children to move freely between the interest areas.
- Children were observed to play in the outdoor area on the morning of inspection

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

1.

(a) The registered provider has ensured that there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and outdoors. It was observed on the day of inspection that the care room hosts a wide range of play equipment with ample numbers of resources available to children. The equipment was contained at child height making it accessible to all children.

There were clearly defined areas of play including, art, construction, tabletop activities, library and a home corner. The outdoor areas were observed to be accessible to children on the day of inspection. There was a wide variety of equipment available to the children for use in the outdoor environment.

(b) The care room was equipped with a rest area. The rest area was in a quiet space, apart from the main area, and had comfortable soft furnishings, and mats should any child need a rest during the day. Should a child need to sleep, mats and blankets were made available to children. These mats were stored at child level, meaning children could choose them when necessary. The care room was large enough to facilitate both sleeping children and children at play.

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

- Mealtimes were spread evenly throughout the day to ensure children had access to food regularly.
- Children who stayed for longer than three hours were served with an additional snack.
- All food is brought to the service from home and stored safely in the service.
- On the day of inspection, examples of the mid-morning snacks were noted to include rice cakes, sandwiches, a selection of fruit and yogurts.
- The children's water bottles were stored at child height and were accessible to the children at all times throughout the day.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- During discussion, staff confirmed that snacks would be offered to any child who became hungry outside of the allocated mealtimes.
- There was a selection of food available should any child forget their lunch. These included rice cakes and crackers.

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 had been secured, and this ensured no unauthorised entry to, or exit from, the service.
- All play equipment appeared to be in a clean state and of good repair.
- Heavy equipment and furniture had been anchored to prevent them falling onto a child.
- All electrical cables or flexes were in good repair and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area had been securely fenced to prevent unauthorised entry to or from the area.
- The children's bags and coats were stored safely off the floor.
- The staircase leading to the care room was appropriately lit and had been fitted with a suitable handrail.

Infection Control:

- Staff were observed to sanitize tables prior to mealtimes.
- The sanitary area was fitted with mechanical ventilation, liquid soap, paper towels and pedal bins.
- The hand wash basin in the main care room had warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. Water temperatures were recorded at 37.6°C which allowed for effective hand washing.
- Perishable food was safely refrigerated.
- Windows were open in the care rooms to aid natural ventilation.
- Children were observed to wash their hands prior to eating.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed care plan and emergency medication was available for the use of one child.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- A supply of fever reducing medication was stored safely by the service.

Safe Sleep:

- The registered provider has developed records to record the checking of sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were kept free and unobstructed.
- Wall tethered fire extinguishers were available in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Staff did not ensure that children washed their hands when they returned from outdoor play. This posed a risk of cross infection.
2. A swing bin was in use by the children for used tissue at the nose hygiene station. This posed a risk of cross infection.
3. There was no warm running water available to children in the sanitary accommodation. Water temperature was recorded at 15.3°C. A lack of warm water could impede effective hand-washing procedures and pose a risk of cross infection. It is acknowledged that when this was brought to the attention of the area manager, a plumber was immediately contacted.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. In their written response, the registered provider has stated that staff have been reminded of the importance of hand washing and that posters have been displayed prominently within the service.
2. The swing bin has now been replaced with a foot operated pedal bin.
3. Water temperatures are now being monitored twice per day to ensure the continuity of warm running water.

Supporting documentation submitted

The written response contained the following evidence:

- Photographs of water temperatures being tested.
- Photographs of the new foot operated pedal bins.
- Updated Infection control policy.
- Photograph of hand wash posters.

Summary Comment

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

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 insured, with insurance for 22 children valid until 27 March 2027. The records detailed the category of service covered, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.