

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC401
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Teach na nÓige
-------------------------	----------------

Address of Service:	Castle Heights, Liscarroll, Mallow, Co. Cork
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	P51 TC59
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Brian Downes
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	11/04/2025
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Second Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick
---	---

Inspection undertaken by:	F Collins
----------------------------------	-----------

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	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Teach na nÓige, is a purpose-built childcare facility in Liscarroll, North Cork. The service offers full day care, part-time day care and a sessional service. The service also facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education programme for 38 weeks of the year.

The centre is a not-for-profit community service and operates between the hours of 07.00-18.00 hours, Monday – Friday. The service caters for children aged six months to six years.

The service has five childcare rooms, all of which were in operation on the day of inspection. There are sleep facilities, nappy changing facilities, kitchen facilities, a service office, a staff room and both adult and children’s toilets. The service has three dedicated outdoor areas.

The service is registered to provide school aged care.

Staffing

There are a total of 27 staff employed in the service, 18 of whom were onsite on the day of inspection, 17 caring for the children and one working in the kitchen.

The qualifications of the staff caring for children range from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

The following Regulations were inspected:

Regulation 9 (1) (2) (4)

Regulation 10

Regulation 11 (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19

Regulation 20 (1) (a)(b)

Regulation 23

Regulation 25 (1)

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.

Additional information

Two Immediate action notices were issued to the service on 11 April 2025.

The first immediate action notice was for a staff member being onsite and having access to children without Garda vetting. A response was received from the service on the 14 April 2025 stating the staff member was removed from the roster and would not have access to children until the Garda vetting disclosure had been received.

The second immediate action notice was for the safety of the sleep rooms where children under the age of one year slept; the sleep room temperature reached 23.1 °C. The response received from the registered provider on

14 April 2025 indicated how the service would maintain the children’s safety and maintain the sleep room temperatures below 20°C.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*
- (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 a deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person in charge was not on the premises, a named deputy person in charge was available. A person for both buildings knew their role in the event the person in charge was not on the premises.
- (b) The person in charge or a named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service as confirmed by the roster.
- (c) There was a clear structure in the service that identified the management structure. Each care room had a room leader and childcare staff. Each person's role and responsibility within the service was identified.
- (2)
- Twenty-seven adults work in the service, all 27 staff files were assessed for completeness.
- (a) Of the 54 references required, 46 validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Of the 54 references required, 8 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file for 26 adults who work in the service. The service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of each of adults working in the service. The Garda vetting for four staff were not renewed within the last 3 years. This non-compliance will be outlined in Regulation 23 below.
- (d) Police vetting was available for two staff where they had lived outside of the State for greater than six months in another country.
- (4) Twenty-four adults held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above, or a qualification deemed as equivalent by the minister. The remaining three adults did not hold a relevant qualification and were not part of providing care to the pre-school children. One adult was employed as the cook and the remaining two adults worked in the school aged service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (c) Garda vetting was not on file for one adult who was working in the service and had access to children. Not having staff appropriately vetted may allow staff who are inappropriate to have access to children.
- An immediate action notice was issued to the person in charge at the end of the inspection regarding having staff onsite that did not have Garda Vetting. A response was received on the next working day stating the named person was taken off the roster and would not have access to children until they were Garda vetted.

(d) It could not be determined if six staff required police vetting as the curriculum vitae held on file for the six staff were incomplete and did not indicate where the adult had resided since reaching the age of 18 years. Potentially not vetting staff appropriately may allow for inappropriate staff to have access to children.

Not vetting staff prior to their appointment is at variance with the service's recruitment policy which stated the offer of employment will only be made following receipt of appropriate references and when vetting checks are completed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (c)

The staff member was immediately removed from the service and Garda vetting applied for. Garda vetting has subsequently been obtained and reviewed. The registered provider has put a system in place to ensure all vetting requirements are in place prior to staff commencing in the service.

(d) Curriculum vitae have been updated to reflect continuous employment for each employee. The registered provider has committed to ensuring that all curriculum vitae will be thoroughly reviewed as part of the recruitment process. One police vetting was identified as being required for one adult and this has been obtained. The recruitment policy has been updated to ensure all vetting is completed prior to staff commencing in the service. The service plans to include a checklist in each staff file to be completed once all required documentation has been provided and assessed.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(c) Copies of Garda vetting disclosures have been received for four staff.

(d) Curriculum vitae have been received for 10 staff. A copy of police vetting has been received for one staff member.

Summary Comment

The requirements for this regulation as assessed have been met.

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

- The outdoor play policy was reviewed and met the requirements. It stated how children would be kept safe in the outdoor areas.

Non-Compliance Information

- The recruitment policy was reviewed and was incomplete as the policy did not indicate how or where the records in relation to the recruitment process would be stored.
- The safe sleep policy did not indicate the procedures to follow in the event of a sleep related emergency. This is required so staff are aware of what to do should such an event occur in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- The recruitment policy has been updated and will be reviewed on an annual basis.
- The registered provider has stated the safe sleep policy has been updated and will be reviewed on an annual basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Recruitment policy has been received.
- The safe sleep policy has been received

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met with the policies indicating the required detail to support staff in their work.

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 needs of the children were met throughout the day as observed during the inspection. Nappy changes, assistance with eating and putting children to sleep was achieved with the assistance of the person in charge and the deputy person in charge assisting in the care rooms.

(2) All five care rooms were in operation on the day of inspection.

The adult child ratios were correct in the care rooms as observed throughout the day.

- The Daisy (baby) room accommodated children aged 0-1 year and all children were attending on a full day care basis. On the day of inspection there was one adult caring for three children.
- The Daffodils room: This room had two qualified staff working with eight children aged 1-2 years, all attending on a full day care basis.
- The Buttercups room: This room was staffed by three adults caring for seven children, all aged 2-3 years. All children attending this care room were attending on a part-time/full day care basis.
- The Sunflower room: This care room was staffed by 3 qualified staff caring for 13 children aged 3-5 years in the morning.
- The Bluebells room: This room was staffed by 3 adults during the morning sessional service was caring for 13 children.

The staffing in each care room and the additional staff on the roster indicated the staff cover for breaks.

(8) (a) The roster provided to the inspector by the registered provider identified that a minimum of two staff were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

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

- Meals and snacks on the day of inspection were served at appropriate times and children were provided with drinks throughout the day. Drinks bottles were accessible to the children at all times. Assistance was given to the children that required same, and children were observed to be encouraged to be self-sufficient where possible. Staff were observed to be on hand to support the children to feed them, as observed in the Daisy room. Children in the Daffodils room were helped as needed. Appropriate crockery and cutlery were available and used.
- Staff supported the children with toileting when required in the Sunflower and Bluebells rooms, and a sticker chart was in use where a child was starting to toilet train. The children in the other rooms had nappies changed on a schedule and in between if needed. Clothing, if soiled, was changed as required.
- Sleep was facilitated throughout the day for the children attending the Daisy room. Sleep was facilitated at scheduled times after dinner for the children attending the remaining care rooms if the children required sleep. The children attending the Daffodils room had access to a dedicated sleep room and the children attending the Buttercups room slept in the care room.
- All children could move about freely and there was no restriction placed on their movement.
- Children were dressed appropriately for outside with light clothing and sun hats as the day of inspection was a hot and sunny day.

Supporting Relationships

- Each staff member was assigned to a care room. The children were accustomed to the staff and knew their carers. The children were observed to seek the support of the staff when required. Staff were observed to spend time comforting the children as needed. This was especially noted in the Diasy (baby) room, where the staff member was observed to hug and comfort children when they were upset.

- The children were observed to play alone and play in small and large groups in the Sunflower and Bluebells rooms. These children played outside for long periods throughout the day, in individual groups in the morning and in one larger group after snack time.
- The play activities in the rooms caring for the younger children was led by the adults but allowed for an easy structure to allow the children play alone.
- Parents were spoken to at drop off and collection and updates were also posted on the service's care application which indicated meals, nappy changes/toileting and sleep checks which was available to all parents.

Physical And Material Environment

- Each of the care rooms had a variety of toys and resources. The resources were specific to encourage the development of each child, i.e. colouring pencils for fine motor development.
- Tabletop activities of jigsaws, bricks and shape sorters allowed for cognitive development and fine motor development.
- Circle time, when stories were told, allowed the children to talk and encouraged speech development. Staff in the Sunflower room were telling stories of Easter and children were observed to interact with the staff telling the story. Following on from this the children participated in an Easter egg hunt.
- Dress up clothes were accessible to the children to promote imaginary play in the Bluebells room.
- All shelving was accessible to the children in all care rooms and the children were able to choose their activities as required.

The Outdoor Environment

The outdoor environment consisted of three separate areas. One area was for the Daisy and Daffodils rooms where the toys and equipment were suitable for the age range of the younger children. The second outdoor area to the side of the Creche building was set up for the age range of 2–3-year-old children with additional activities to promote risk taking such as balancing. This area was well-developed with soft matting and concrete. Finally, the large play space to the back of the pre-school section of the service had an artificial grass surface with toys to promote gross motor development. There were climbing frames with ropes to climb on, slides, swings and playhouses.

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 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (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 play facilities for the children were suitable for the age range of children attending the service. Each child had access to both indoor and outdoor play facilities, as observed on the day of inspection.
- (b) The rest facilities in each of the care rooms were appropriate with soft matting in the Daisy room, couches and mats in the Daffodil room and a soft seating area in the remaining three rooms.
- Sleep facilities were available where needed. The children attending the Daisy room had access on an ongoing basis to cots in a sleep room adjacent to the care room. The children attending the Daffodil room had access to cots in a separate room and the children attending the Buttercups room had access after dinner to stackable beds. No child under the age of 2 years slept on a floor bed or a stackable bed. This was confirmed by the service's sleep policy, which indicated children under 2 years of age would sleep in a standard cot.

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 were secured as required. All external doors and the gate to the outdoor area of the Buttercups room were secured with touch pad locking mechanisms, which were accessible to the staff. This prevented any child gaining access to the road and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.
- The emergency fire exit doors were clearly identified and were unobstructed.

- The opening for the windows was secure, with the windows in the main building on a tilt and turn mechanism.
- There were no full-length glass doors onsite.
- There were no highchairs in use and the children in the Daisy room were placed in low chairs for their meals.
- The electrical cables observed were in good condition and out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.
- Heavy equipment and furniture assessed were secured to the walls to prevent them falling should a child climb on same.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach on high shelves.
- There was hot water accessible throughout the service and the range in temperature of the water was between 20, and 39°C, thus preventing a scald injury to the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was cleaned daily and weekly and cleaning checklists were completed by the staff indicating daily and weekly cleaning.
- The children were observed to wash their hands after nappy changing, before meal and snack time and after outdoor and messy play. The children were assisted with hand washing by the staff and reminded where necessary.
- There was hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels available at most of the children's wash hand basins and adult toilets, at all nappy changing stations and the sinks in the care rooms.
- The staff observed when changing nappies wore gloves, aprons and washed the hands of the children and of themselves. A supply of disposable aprons and gloves was available at all nappy changing areas. Children had named individual shelves for the storage of their nappies and toiletries.
- All coats and bags were stored off the ground, minimising contact and cross infection.
- Staff were observed to clean the tables after mealtimes with a suitable disinfectant.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were carried out on the children who slept in the sleep room adjacent to the Daisy room and on the sleeping children from the Daffodils room. These checks were recorded on the service's care application, and historical checks could be assessed on inspection. The checks included position, colour, breathing and the sleep room temperature.

Fire Safety:

- The fire doors were unobstructed.
- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. The sleep room temperatures in the sleep room where children under the age of one year were sleeping was recorded at 22.2°C at 11.43 am and at 23.1°C at 11.21 am.

The staff were requested by the inspector to take immediate action to reduce the room temperature.

Additional fans were placed in the sleep room and the person in charge arranged for a member of staff to remain in the sleep room to ensure the safety of the children when the room temperature could not be reduced.

An immediate action notice was issued to the person in charge at the end of the inspection to take immediate action within the sleep room to ensure the safety of the children aged under one year and maintain the sleep room temperature between 16-20°C. In response to the safety concerns raised regarding room temperatures, the service has implemented measures to ensure the safety of the children: the windows will be opened daily from 7am, additional cooling fans are being put in place and improved calibrated thermometers are being purchased to ensure accurate recordings are being taken.

Infection Control:

2. Multi touch bins were in use across the service for the disposal of soiled nappies. Using these bins creates multiple times when cross infection and contamination may occur and poses a risk of cross infection within the service.
3. The soap dispenser in the Bluebells room children's toilets was not working and children could not access soap to assist with effective hand washing, potentially leading to cross contamination and the spread of infection.
4. The nappy changing room, inclusive of under the changing mat between the Daisy and Daffodil rooms, were not maintained in a clean condition and may be the source of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

5. No medication administration request form had been completed where a child had a medical requirement and who may need the administration of emergency medication in the event of an allergic reaction. An instruction leaflet was available to indicate when the medication may be required however no written request was available. Not ensuring that a request form for the correct medication with the correct dose, route of

administration and correct child's details are available to the staff may lead to the child's needs not being timely met.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

1. The registered provider has stated that all staff have been instructed on the appropriate procedures to follow in the event of a sleep-related emergency. The policy has been updated, and staff have been trained on the updated practices.

The management of the sleep rooms includes all sleep rooms are cooled each morning, and room temperatures are regularly monitored. Should temperatures exceed the recommended guidelines, a staff member will remain in the sleep room at all times to ensure the safety of the children.

Infection Control:

2. New touch free bins have been purchased and all bins that require any handling have been removed to uphold high hygiene standards and minimize the risk of infection and cross-contamination. Non-contact bins are available throughout the service, including in all nappy changing areas. Checklists have been updated to include regular inspection of these bins.
3. All soap dispensers have been inspected and are now functioning effectively. All staff have been instructed to regularly check soap dispensers and to alert management as required. Hand soap is available in the event the soap dispensers are out of order.
4. Staff have been instructed to thoroughly clean all areas of the nappy changing station after each use, including the underside of the mats. Staff have been instructed to maintain the high hygiene standards expected within this service. These have been included on the sanitary area daily checklist. Management have committed to completing daily checks to ensure all sanitary areas are maintained to a high standard.

Medication Administration:

5. An administration request has been completed for the child who may require the use of emergency medication in the event of a medical emergency.

A care plan has been developed and signed by both management and the child's parents to ensure appropriate action is taken if an emergency occurs. All staff working with this child have received the appropriate training on the use of the emergency medication. The medication policy has been updated to include the importance of having a care plan in place for any child who may require medication.

Copies of the care plan are available in the child's classroom, in the secured medication cabinet, and in the office.

All staff have been informed and are fully aware of the procedures for administering medication and the steps to take if it is required. In cases where a child may potentially need medication, a medication record will be completed in advance, this will indicate the name of the medication and the correct dosage.

The registered provider has stated that all staff working with the children who require the prescribed emergency medication have been trained.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

1. The safe sleep policy has been received.

Infection Control:

2. Photographs of the contactless bins have been received. A copy of the checklists for each room including the non-contact bins have been received.
3. A copy of the checklist which includes the soap dispensers has been received.
4. A copy of the sanitary area checklist has been received, and this includes the nappy changing areas.

Medication Administration:

5. The medication policy has been received. The care plan and medication request form for the child in question have been received. Training certificates on the use of the emergency medication has been received for eight staff.

Summary Comment

The requirement for this regulation has been met.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that staff trained in first aid for children were at all times immediately available to the children. Eleven staff held up to date training in First Aid Responder first aid.