

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE140		
Name of Service:	Teach Spraoi Nature Kindergarden Ltd		
Address of Service:	Toonagh, Beside Toonagh N.S., Fountain, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 RWV5		
Name of Registered Provider:	Nora Custy		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	15/04/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM 14
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. McCarthy		
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		

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Description of service

Teach Spraoi Pre School & After School Service was established in 2010, as a privately owned service. The service is located in a rural setting, opposite Toonagh National School in Fountain, Ennis, County Clare. Full day, part-time and sessional care is provided Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00 for 48 weeks of the year. The programme of care and education is facilitated across four care rooms in a two-storey house and in the nature garden. School aged childcare is provided each afternoon and during school holidays. The outdoor play areas are located to the front, rear and sides of the building.

Staffing

On the 15 April 2026 the registered provider and four adults were present. The adults working directly with the children have appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Evidence of staff engagement in continuing professional development was available on file.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9-Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11-Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19-Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 16-Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(h)(k)

Regulation 23-Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25-First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26-Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28-Insurance

Regulation 29-Premises (e)

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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. 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, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.*

(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 provider was the person in charge, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider was available during the inspection.

(2)

Five files were available in respect of the registered provider and the four adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

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Seven written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)

Three written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of adults working in the service

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of four adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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,

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Compliance Information

- (1)
During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 15 April 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Four adults cared for the nineteen children in attendance in the morning and the fourteen children in attendance the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
During the inspection more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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:*
- (h) *details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
 - (k) *details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h)
The children's daily attendance to include arrival and departure times were recorded in a record book.
- (k)
The service's accident, injury and incidents record book was reviewed. Four records from 2026 were reviewed, these were completed in full to include a parental signature after the incidents occurred.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The adults interacted with the children in a kind and respectful manner. The adults listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's preferences, personal interests and capabilities. The adults supported the children in individual and group play based activities throughout the programme and engaged in open ended discussions.

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment, at mealtime and whilst using the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The programme of care and education was child focused and the children were notified in advance of transitions in activities. An open-door policy for parents/guardians was in place for the service. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions with parents/guardians. The adults discuss the children's day and observations with the parent/guardians during drop off and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment:

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The service is adequately resourced for the number, age and developmental level of the children in attendance. The programme of care and education was facilitated predominantly in two care rooms and in the outdoor play areas and the children's belongings were stored in a third room on the ground floor. The children engaged in open ended tabletop and floor-based activities in the indoor environment. The care rooms were bright and adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. Designated areas of interest were accessible and were appropriately equipped with supporting materials and equipment for the children. The defined interest areas included a home corner, a dress up area, a rest and reading area, low level shelving units were equipped with a large quantity of imaginative, constructive and manipulative equipment and materials. The two care rooms located on the first floor were laid out with areas of interest to include home corners and supporting equipment, a construction area, a large range of dress up costumes, pretend play equipment and materials and a spacious room with soft seating, mats and a large range of reading materials. A nook was available under the stairs with soft seating, furnishings, and a unit with reading materials. This space was used by the children to rest and relax.

The children and adults designed individual snails using cardboard, paper and paint from snails captured in the garden. An open-ended discussion ensued in relation to snails, where snails live and dandelions. Children engaged in story time, rhyme and song and transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment engaging in challenging and enriching activities. Children's observations and developmental progress were recorded using an electronic application.

The outdoor play areas surrounding the building offered challenging and enriching experiences for the children. The nature kindergarten was enclosed by a wall and gate. The outdoor environment afforded the children an opportunity to climb, explore and engage in sensorial play and learning. The children have access to wooden activity units, swings, slides, tyres, wooden logs of various shapes and sizes for balance games, a tree house and climbing frames. A large dome accommodated a large space for the children's plants and all-weather gear, and wellingtons were stored in this area.

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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:

- A key coded, bell operated system with camera surveillance was in place at the entrance door to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor area was secured with a concrete wall, fencing and a key coded gate to protect the children within.
- The children were signed in and out on arrival and departure to the service in a written record book and supervised at all times during the inspection.
- Storage facilities were secured and inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The indoor and outdoor environments was maintained in a clean condition. Surfaces and furniture were cleaned after use.
- Warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary facilities.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals which included prior to mealtime and after using the toilet and after messy play.

Fire Safety:

- Records of completed monthly fire drills were available in the service.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.
- The fire assembly point and the fire exit route signage were readily identifiable.
- A fire action notice was displayed at the entrance outline the fire evacuation procedure for the service.

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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)

Two adults working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

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 firefighting 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)

Records of completed monthly fire drills were available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 18 March 2026.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance service took place respectively on the 14 November 2025 and the 18 March 2026.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the service.

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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-five children attending on a full day care basis. The policy is valid until 27 March 2027.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e)
The children had access to sanitary facilities adjacent to the care rooms on the first floor. The sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped with child sized toilets and two wash hand basins. An adult sanitary facility was also available on the ground floor.