

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CN021		
Name of Service:	Dúanaire Kindergarten		
Address of Service:	Hall Street, Kingscourt, Co. Cavan		
Eircode:	A82 K577		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sheelagh McCabe		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	28/05/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	98	PM 63
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	D. Murray & AM. Cunningham		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		

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

Dùanaire Kindergarten provides a full day, part time, sessional care and education to children from birth to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) and operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm.

The premises is a purpose build two storey building.

The rooms are as follows:

On the ground floor, the **Crèche room** facilitates the care of children from 1 to 2 years while the **Play school room** accommodates children from 2 to 2 years 8 months.

On the first floor, the **Montessori rooms 1&2** provides care and education to children from 3 years 6 months to 5 years.

Outside, Studio 1&2 (Separate wooden buildings) provide care for children from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months.

Other facilities include a main kitchen along with small kitchen areas off the Creche and Studio 1 rooms, sanitary facilities and a cot room. There are five outdoor play areas designated to specific age groups along with a balcony area off Montessori room 1 for messy play. A large parking area was available to facilitate drop off and collection.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager, 16 childcare staff, a cook and 1 household staff member. One additional staff member was on leave. Present on the day of inspection were the registered provider, manager, 15 childcare staff, a cook and 1 household staff member.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 20,21,22 & 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Crèche, Play school room and Montessori rooms 1&2 and did not include the Studio rooms 1&2.

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

11/06/2024 An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to the regulation 9 with a response received which was accepted by the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, manager, 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,

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

(2) Seven new staff files were reviewed. The remaining staff files were reviewed at the last inspection with 2 non-compliances remaining outstanding.

(a)&(b) In respect of references, fourteen validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source for the 7 new staff members.

(c) Garda vetting was reviewed for all staff on the day, Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 19 staff members. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for 2 new staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Seventeen childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6) (a) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(c) No garda vetting was available for one staff member who did not work directly with the children but had access to the children on a daily basis. An Immediate Action Notice was issued on the 11/06/2025 with a response received which was accepted by the inspectorate.

(d) Police vetting was not available for the following:

- One new staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- One staff member who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult. This was found non-compliant on the last inspection on the 29/05/2024 and remained outstanding.

(4) One staff member had no documentation to confirm that she had completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. This was a non-compliance on the last inspection on the 29/05/2024 and remains outstanding.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(c) Garda vetting was received for the staff member and was submitted to the Inspectorate.

(d) Application has been made for Police vetting for the 2 staff members.

The registered provider will ensure that all staff members have garda vetting and police vetting where required before commencing employment.

(4) A letter has been received from the college. Certificates are not awarded until October 2025 and will be forwarded to the inspectorate when received.

The registered provider will ensure that all new staff members have a childcare qualification before commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(c) Garda vetting for 1 staff member.

(d) Proof of police vetting application for the 2 staff members.

(4) Letter from the college.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted a Grad Vetting disclosure for one staff member and this has addressed the non-compliance in relation to Regulation 9(2)(c).

The registered provider has not addressed the non-compliances in respect of Regulation 9(2)(d) as police vetting was not submitted to the inspectorate for the 2 staff members. It is the responsibility of the registered provider to have appropriate police vetting on file for both staff members and must provide a copy of the outstanding police vetting to the Inspectorate when received. This non-compliance remains outstanding and will be reviewed at the next inspection.

(4) The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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) Present on the day of inspection were the registered provider, manager and 15 childcare staff caring for 98 children. The manager and registered provider were available to provide relief in the care rooms as needed. The household staff member was available to provide support to the care rooms during transitions.

(2) On the morning of the inspection the following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:

The **Crèche room** had 13 children ranging in age from 1 to 2 years being cared for by 3 staff. Twelve children were attending the full day care service with 1 child on induction who went home at 11am.

The **Play school** room had 12 children ranging in age from 2 to 2 years 8 months being cared for by 2 staff. Eight children were attending the full day care service with 4 children attending the sessional service.

Montessori room 1 had 18 children ranging in age from 3 years 6 months to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff. Eleven children were attending the full day care service with 7 children attending the sessional service.

Montessori room 2 had 19 children ranging in age from 4 to 5 years being cared for by 3 staff. Nine children were attending the full day care service while 10 children were attending the sessional service.

Studio 1 had 18 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months being cared for by 2 staff. Eight children were attending the full day care service with 10 children attending the sessional service.

Studio 2 had 18 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 3 years 6 months being cared for by 2 staff. Fifteen children were attending the full day care service with 3 children attending the sessional service.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that there were always two adults on the premises when the service was in operation, as evidenced in the staff roster maintained in 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

(1)(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members sat with the children at snack and dinner time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- In the Creche and Play school rooms any child who became upset or who were settling in were nurtured and cuddled until they settled. Sleep was child led for the younger children with the older children going to sleep at the service designated sleep time after dinner at 12:30pm.
- Children's nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with warm one-to-one interactions during direct care. Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Children were observed being allowed to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish. The themes in the Crèche and Play school rooms were "Summer" and "Flowers" with children's artwork displayed to reflect these themes. In Montessori room 1 children were learning about North America, staff encouraged conversation and participation from all children with the use of props and visual aids. In Montessori room 2, children participated in circle time as they learned their sounds, all children got the opportunity to stand up and show the sound they were holding. Children appeared to enjoy the activity.
- All children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members throughout the day.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members communicated with parents on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard. The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- Individual programs of care were available for children who required additional support.
- Transitions were handled smoothly as the children were given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next. Overall, the children appeared comfortable, happy and relaxed in their environment

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-

(b) 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

(3)(a) 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)(b) The cot room had 7 standard cots for the younger children requiring sleep. The Play school room and the cosy area in the Creche room had stackable beds placed on the floor for the older children requiring sleep. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest, if needed.

(3)(a) The service had 5 outdoor spaces which were located to the rear and side of the building. An outdoor balcony was also available off the Montessori room 1. The outdoor spaces were enclosed with hedging and fencing had a variety of surfaces consisting of low impact all weather surface, paving stones, artificial grass and real grass with secure side gates.

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 care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- The outdoor areas had goal post, balls, tuff trays, ride on toys, building blocks, plastic and mud kitchens, see saws, black boards, wooden activity unit with swings and a slide, sand pit, wooden hut, rockers and tyres which supported fine and gross motor development.

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 service had a 2-week menu plan for the main hot meal with a variety of hot dishes ranging from meat and poultry cooked on site for the children attending the full day care service. The dinner served on the day was beef mince and peas with mash potatoes. The children brought their own morning and afternoon snacks. Individual drink cups and containers were available in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

There was no alternative hot meal available for the children who did not eat meat or disliked the hot meal available. Five children had mash potatoes only as their main hot meal.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The chef will prepare an alternative hot meal on a daily basis. The registered provider will ensure that an alternative hot meal is available.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. None required as this was discussed on the day of inspection with assurances provided at an alternative hot meal would be provided on a daily basis.

Summary Comment

The response received has been reviewed and accepted. The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. This will be reviewed at the next inspection.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the 5 outdoor spaces were enclosed and had secure gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the 3 outdoor spaces.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy and nappy changing policy were implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All pacifiers were stored in individual boxes in the cot room.

Safe Sleep:

Safe sleep practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- Temperature of the cot room was maintained between 16 to 20⁰C and between 18 to 22⁰C in the Creche and Play school room while children were sleeping.
- A sleep log was available to record the position, colour and breathing pattern on all sleeping children.

- Block out blinds were available which created an atmosphere conducive to sleep.
- Children sleeping on stackable beds were supervised at all times.

Fire Safety:

The following fire safety measures were observed:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. One staff members garda vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Safe Sleep:

2. The sleep log was not being maintained at all times, at 11:40am in the Play school room, one child was asleep on a stackable bed and a records of sleep checks was not maintained. Recording of the sleep log commenced when requested by the Early Years Inspector.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1.Garda vetting has been renewed for the staff member. The registered provider will ensure that garda vetting is renewed every 3 years.

Safe Sleep:

2.A sleep log is now maintained on all sleeping children The registered provider will ensure that this practice is implemented on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- 1.Garda vetting for the staff member.
- 2.None required as sleep log seen on the day of the inspection.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.

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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 15/05/2025.

(b) A record was maintained of the mains powered smoke alarms and firefighting equipment on the premises. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 20th May 2025. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on the 5th September 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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 that the service was adequately insured for 112 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2025 to the 27th March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) There was no means of heating in one of the sanitary facilities in Studio 1.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(c) A new heater has been installed in Studio One. The registered provider will ensure that the heater is turned on as required.

Supporting documentation submitted

(c) Photographic evidence of heater on a wall.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances. The response received has been reviewed and accepted.