

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DL128
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Name of Service:	Slí an Eolais
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Address of Service:	Quay Rd, Dungloe, Co. Donegal
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Eircode:	F94 K2F9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Ward
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	24/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	14
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F95 XK94
Inspection undertaken by:	L Mc Glynn
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

Slí an Eolais is privately owned and operated preschool service offering full day, part time and sessional preschool care to children aged 1-6 years. The service operates between the hours of 8.30am to 5.45pm each weekday with a sessional programme from 9.15am to 12.15pm. The service is also registered to provide school age care. The premises is located in a rural setting on the outskirts of the town of Dungloe. The service operates from a detached two-story building located on the grounds of the registered provider's home. There are five playrooms, three on the ground floor and two on the first floor. On the day of inspection, the two rooms on the first floor were being used to provide school age care only. The premises has its own kitchen, where children's main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. The preschool children have access to various secured outdoor play areas at the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the person in charge and is on the premises on a daily basis. There are a total of 14 staff members working in the service, 12 of whom work with directly the preschool children. There is one staff member employed to work solely in the school age service and one staff member employed to work in the kitchen. All staff members working with preschool children hold 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.

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 inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 20, 23 and 27; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise.
 - (b) The registered provider was the person in charge and was on the premises and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider confirmed that they or the deputy person in charge were on site at all times during the operation of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee. During the inspection, the person in charge and a deputy was available.

- (2) At the time of inspection, the registered provider confirmed that there were 14 named staff members who worked in the service. Four of these staff members had commenced working in the service since the previous inspection. A review of records demonstrated that the vetting documentation for 10 of the staff had been reviewed during previous inspection and were found to be compliant under this regulation. With reference to the above listed elements of Regulation 9, recruitment records in respect of the four newly recruited staff were reviewed and the following information was available:
- (a)(b) Eight validated, past employer references were on file for the four staff members.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police vetting was available for one staff member whose employment record indicated that they had resided outside of the state for a period greater than six months.
- (4) Documentary evidence was provided to indicate that the four staff members had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There was a sufficient number of adults employed to work with children during the hours of operation. On the morning of the unannounced inspection there were 6 adults working directly with 30 preschool children and in the afternoon, there were 4 adults working with 14 preschool children.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained throughout the inspection. When assessed at approximately 11.00am the following adult child ratios were observed;

- There were two adults caring for 10 children aged 1-2 years in the baby room.
- There were two adults caring for seven children aged 2-3 years in the toddler room.
- There were two adults caring for 13 children aged 3-5 years in the preschool room.

In addition to this, there were 18 school age children attending the service with three staff members assigned to work with them.

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.*

(2) A registered provider-

- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or*
- (b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

Compliance Information

(a) The service consisted of five playrooms, each one assigned for use by different groups of children. As the two rooms on the first floor were being used by school age children on the day of inspection these were not assessed and therefore are not detailed in the report.

There were adequate and suitable indoor play facilities available in each room for the age range of children attending. The rooms presented as bright and visually appealing spaces with an orderly arrangement of play

equipment and materials set into clearly defined areas of interest. These included arts and crafts, construction, small world items, dress up props, play kitchen areas, library's, sensory tables, relaxing areas, problem solving toys and wide range of manipulate play resources. Open low level shelving units enabled all items to be readily accessible to the children and suitable sized tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities. Appropriate seating by way of highchairs with a stable footrest was provided in the baby room to cater for younger children.

The room catering for children aged one to two years contained an area specifically for younger babies, not yet mobile. This area included soft floor matting, fiddle boards and a shatter proof mirror with pull up bar. The larger area catered for children slightly older who may be more mobile and contained a range of interest areas such as kitchen, construction, doll and baby care areas. Open low level open shelving was available with a range of age-appropriate play materials such as sensory play items, open ended learning materials, musical instruments and cause and effect toys.

(1)(b)

There was a designated sleep room off the Montessori room containing three cots and an additional cot off the toddler room. Each cot was fitted with a mattress containing the required safety label. There was individual storage of bed linen for each child. Stackable floor beds were available for children aged over 2 years to sleep if required. Each of the rooms were equipped with suitable and comfortable rest areas including soft floor mats, soft cushions and seating areas. The registered provider discussed plans to expand each of these areas further in the coming months.

(2) (a) (b)

The children had access to a range of play experiences outdoors with the service providing three separate play spaces. The first area was used by the younger children and provided large climb and slide units along side ride on toys and space for free movement. The second area was partially covered and was used by older preschool children. This space provided opportunities for children to climb, slide and move freely. The area also housed a large, covered sand pit with an abundance of digging materials. A sheltered area with tables was used for art and craft activities and there was a playhouse to provide role play opportunities for children. The third play area consisted of a large flat surface covered in artificial grass providing space for team games.

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 external outdoor play areas were secured with boundary walls and fencing.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were stored inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- Blinds cords on windows were securely fastened and thereby inaccessible to a preschool child.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children at all times during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Foot pedal operated bins were provided in the sanitary accommodation and throughout the service for the safe and hygienic disposal of waste. Larger waste bins outdoors were inaccessible to children.
- Children were observed washing hands at regular intervals including before meals and on returning indoors from outdoor play. Thermostatically controlled hot water was provided at each wash hand basin for effective handwashing.
- A supply of protective equipment was available for staff to use when changing nappies and toileting children. Staff also wore appropriate equipment when preparing and serving food.
- The rooms and sanitary accommodation presented in a clean and well-maintained condition. Staff members were responsible for routine daily cleaning duties and cleaning schedules were recorded and maintained up to date.
- Each of the care rooms and the sanitary accommodation were well ventilated with openable windows which were observed to be ajar for periods throughout the day.

Administration of Medication:

- There was no medication administered on the day of inspection. When asked by the inspector, staff were knowledgeable of the procedure for the administration of medication in line with the service policy. Anti-febrile medication stored in the service was out of children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

- Each of the cots in the service were well maintained, appropriate for use by the children and fitted with a well-fitting mattress with the appropriate safety label. The air temperature in the sleep room was

maintained with the required range while children slept. Staff were observed to carry out physical checks on sleeping children at no more than 10-minute intervals.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed. A record of routine fire drills carried out in the service was maintained demonstrating monthly occurrence.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An access door leading from the Montessori room was left unsecured at times during the day when children were playing in the outdoor area. All entry points to the building are required to be secured to prevent unauthorised access.

Infection Control:

2. The cot mattresses were not covered in a waterproof material posing an infection control risk.
3. The sanitary accommodation adjacent to the Montessori room was not equipped with liquid soap, disposable paper towels, toilet roll or a toilet seat posing an infection control risk.

Administration of Medication:

4. While the medication administration records recorded parental consent for administration, there was no evidence that parents had been informed of medication administration on each occasion. It is acknowledged that a phone call is made to parents prior to administration and verbally informed on collection of the child however a written record is required.

Safe Sleep:

5. The records of sleep checks carried out in the baby room did not provide sufficient detail on the colour, breathing pattern or position of each individual child. The records reviewed demonstrated that a tick was documented to confirm that both were checked, however the detail on the child's pallor and breathing is required to be documented.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The door to the Montessori room is locked at all times to prevent unauthorised access.

Infection Control:

2. Water-proof sheets are purchased for all individual children. Waterproof sheets will be on all cots at all times.
3. A toilet seat was fitted. There is a toilet roll holder, liquid soap and paper towels in place. Going forward, all items will be provided.

Administration of Medication:

4. All staff are made aware that parents are required to sign each medication form each time medication is administered. A signature from parents will be required each time medication has been administered.

Safe Sleep:

5. Our sleep forms now include details of colour, breathing pattern or position of each individual child. The old forms were removed and new forms in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

A number of images were submitted with the CAPA response to evidence compliance.

Summary Comment

The response and evidence submitted by the registered provider adequately addresses the non-compliance's identified on inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) On the day of the inspection, there was an inadequate number of nappy changing units for the number of children attending. The regulatory requirement specifies one nappy-changing unit and one wash hand basin for every 11 children in nappies. On the day of inspection, there were 12 children in attendance who were not yet toilet trained and one nappy-changing unit in the service. On discussion with staff, the inspector was informed that at certain periods throughout the year the service may have up to 22 children not yet toilet trained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new nappy changing unit has been ordered. Sufficient nappy changing units will be in place.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The assurance provided by the registered provider has been accepted. The evidence will be reviewed on the next inspection.