

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY264
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Name of Service:	Realtoga Preschool & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Leahy's Terrace, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D04 H295
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bernard Barron
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin.
Inspection undertaken by:	N McEndoo
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

Realtoga Preschool and Afterschool provide an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme on a part-time and sessional basis to children aged 2-6 years. The programme of care is facilitated through a play-based curriculum. The service operates from 8:45am to 13:15pm Monday to Friday. The service is in a residential area of Sandymount, South County Dublin. The premises is a standalone, purpose-built building located on the grounds of a local primary school. The service consists of two large care rooms, and an outdoor play area is available to the front of the premises adjacent to the primary school building.

Staffing

The service currently employs six staff members, all of whom work directly with the preschool children. The registered provider does not work in the service.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the

registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-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, 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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2)

On the day of the inspection, six adults were in attendance: the designated person in charge, four staff members assigned to work directly with the children, and one individual fulfilling a supernumerary role.

The following vetting information was available for six adults:

- (a) 12 written validated references from past employers for all six adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for five of the adults present who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(3)

The procedures specified above in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4)

Six of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

- (1)
On the day of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (4)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection. There were twenty-two pre-school children attending the service, supervised by six adults.

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

The service promoted healthy eating, with food and snacks provided by parents each day. Children's drinks were available on a low-level table in each room, within reach throughout the session, allowing them to hydrate as needed. An individual care plan was in place for a child with a food allergy, and staff were aware of the signs of a reaction and the necessary interventions.

Staff were observed to be gentle and respectful in their interactions with children. Positive communication with parents was noted at collection time, with detailed handovers provided when required. One child who had recently started attending the service needed additional support and comfort, and during collection, extra time and a reassuring conversation were shared between the staff member, parent, and child.

The environment in both care rooms was well-resourced, child-centred, and aligned with national quality frameworks. It supported children's physical, emotional, social, and cognitive development through a balance of structured and open-ended play opportunities. The rooms were organised and stimulating, with play-based materials and specialist Montessori equipment accessible at child level on open shelving, promoting independence, choice, and curiosity. The layout encouraged spontaneous play and movement, and a designated rest area furnished with soft cushions was available. A variety of books supported language development and literacy skills.

On the day of inspection, children accessed an outdoor play area that provided a change of environment and supported energetic play. The area included seating for children and adults, a large tower playhouse with a slide and climbing apparatus, see-saws, and an outdoor kitchen to support sensory and imaginative play.

Activities were child-led, with children given opportunities to choose their engagement and access play equipment throughout the session. Curriculum planning was evident on the walls, showing both short-term and long-term plans. Ongoing observations and assessments informed the curriculum, which appeared flexible and responsive to the children's emerging interests, needs, and preferences. Evidence of curriculum implementation was visible through children's artwork and observed interactions and discussions between children and staff.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The main door to the building was found to be secured on arrival preventing unauthorised access or exit from the premises.
- Materials were observed to be in a good state of repair.
- Warm running water was available for hand washing at a temperature below 43°C.
- Cleaning products and equipment were stored out of the reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with tall wooden fencing and a bolted gate.

Infection Control:

- The care rooms, sanitary facilities, materials, and resources throughout the service were visually clean. Evidence of daily cleaning records was available, and regular cleaning was also observed on the day of inspection.
- Sanitary facilities were observed to be kept maintained and clean.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available within the service for safe disposal of waste.
- There was adequate handwashing facilities provided throughout the service with warm water, liquid soap and paper towels, readily available to children to wash their hands prior to eating and after toileting. Child friendly handwashing posters were placed beside the sinks.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were observed to be unobstructed throughout the service.
- Evidence of regular fire drills from were available for inspection.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.
- Fire extinguishers were on the premises and easily accessible.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. On arrival to the service, the main gate to the premises was observed to be open. It is acknowledged that this gate is shared with the adjoining primary school, however the open gate does pose a risk to unauthorized exit or entry to the premises.
2. The blind cords fitted to the floor-to-ceiling windows in the service pose a safety risk to children. If the cord is not securely replaced, it remains accessible to a child due to its length reaching the floor.
3. A gap between a recently erected fence and an existing fence is required to be secured. Children had access to enter the gap which poses a risk of safety to the child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- 1, Two signs were attached on both sides of the gate. Before going to the playground, a staff member will check if this gate is properly closed.
2. The blind clips were repositioned higher to reduce the cord length, ensuring it is out of reach of children. As part of the daily checklist completed before children arrive, the staff member on the early shift will check that all blinds are safe, intact, and in good working order.

3. A tray has been placed to block access to the gap as a preventive measure. It fits securely and covers the entire space. A staff member is always positioned in that area to ensure supervision. The Board of Management is aware of this situation. We are awaiting the return of the building company responsible for the project to complete the remaining work.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence submitted for points 1, 2 and 3.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) A record was maintained of all children of their times of entry and departure in the service daily.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) Upon arrival at the service, the inspector was not asked to sign into the premises. A second visitor, who was attending a meeting on the day, was also not signed in. As a result, no written record was maintained of either visitor's presence at the premises on the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A record of the inspector's visit was added to the visitor log immediately after it was mentioned. The visitor book has been relocated to the main entrance alongside the staff sign-in and sign-out book. Staff were reminded of this procedure. The person in charge will carry out regular checks of the visitor log to ensure it is consistently maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 24 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured adequate insurance was in place for the preschool service for 42 children up until 27 March 2026.