

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY107
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Name of Service:	Inishbofin Childcare Programme
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Address of Service:	C/o Inishbofin Development Co. Ltd, Middle Quarter, Inishbofin, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 TC6C
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Name of Registered Provider:	Thomas Burke
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	5	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Children & Family Agency, H.R Building, Merlin Park, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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

Inishbofin Childcare Programme is a community service in operation since 1997 providing early years care and education through a play-based curriculum on a sessional basis. It is registered for children aged from 2-6 years of age and the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme is facilitated between the hours of 09:15 and 12:15, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. A school age service is available in the afternoon from 15:10 until 17:40, Monday to Friday, school term time only.

The service operates from a ground floor care room located in the community centre on the rural island of Inishbofin, off the coast of Connemara in County Galway. The service has access to a dedicated children's sanitary area and kitchen. An allocated area is available at the front of the service for outdoor play as the main play area, located at the side of the building, is currently not in use and is awaiting refurbishment. A carpark is available for use by the parents/guardians.

Staffing

The manager operates the service single-handedly; the registered provider does not work in the service. A second person familiar with the operation of the service is available to assist in the event of an emergency and a relief staff member is employed by the service when required.

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 and safety. 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on site on the 04 June 2025 regarding a Garda vetting disclosure which was missing in respect of one adult for whom it was required. A written response was received in the office of the inspectorate on 05 June 2025 to the Immediate Action Notice which was adequate in addressing the issue.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

(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 the service had a designated person in charge and a named person was available in the event of an emergency.
 - (b) The manager was observed on the premises while the pre-school children were present in the service.
- (2)
- Recruitment files for all four adults were reviewed:
- (a) Five of the eight required written and validated references were from past employers.
 - (b) The remaining three of the eight required written and validated references were from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for three of the four adults for whom they were required.
 - (d) One of two overseas police vetting disclosures was on file for an adult who had lived outside the state for a

period of six consecutive months or more as an adult.

(4)

Both the manager and the relief person held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister. The registered provider and the emergency person did not require childcare qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(c) An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 4 June 2025 in respect of one adult who did not have a Garda vetting disclosure on file, posing a safety risk to the children.

(d) No overseas vetting was available for one adult for whom their curriculum vitae indicated it was required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)

(c) An adequate response to the Immediate Action Notice (IAN) was received on 5 June 2025. The adult will have no contact with the children until the Garda vetting disclosure has been received. A Garda vetting application was submitted for the adult, and we are awaiting the disclosure.

(d) An overseas police vetting application was submitted on 18 June 2025. We are awaiting the disclosure. A new vetting checklist is in use to ensure that that all required vetting is in place prior to any adult being appointed, assigned or allocated access or contact with a child attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)

(c) A copy of the Garda vetting application was received in the office of the inspectorate. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

(d) A copy of an email evidencing the receipt of an application for overseas police vetting and a copy of the new vetting checklist were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances under Regulation 9 (2) (c) and (d) remain outstanding as vetting has not been received. These will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—*
- (c) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
A review of the attendance records, from 03 February 2025, indicated that the manager was working directly with the pre-school children while they were present in the service.
- (3)
The adult/child ratios were met. On the morning of the inspection, there were five pre-school children in attendance with one staff member who was observed working directly with the children. All children were aged two to five years of age.
- (8)(c)
The manager operated the service single-handedly. A second person who was familiar with the service operations was available in the event of an emergency. In addition, a relief staff member was employed as required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) Five records of the pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. These were found to contain all of the information required in writing referred to in paragraph (1) (a)-(i) above.

(3)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) (a)-(i) were furnished to the inspector on the premises by the manager.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the registered provider, named person, emergency contact and the relief person were available on the staff recruitment files in the service.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide was available from the service handbook; Inishbofin Community Group Prospectus.
 - (c)-(f) Adult/child ratios, type of care programme, facilities, opening hours and fees were available in the service's handbook.
 - (g) The policies, procedures and statements required under Regulation 10 were located in the service's policies

and procedures folder available in the care room.

(h) Details of attendance by each early years child was recorded in the book of attendance in care room.

(i) A sign in/sign out book was available which detailed the manager's hours of work.

(j) Administration of medication templates were available on a digital application on each child's digital record.

The manager stated that no medication had been administered in the service.

(k) Accident/Incident templates were available on each child's digital record. The manager stated that no accident/incidents had taken place in the service.

(3) The above records in relation to the pre-school service were open to inspection 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

Basic Needs:

- Snacks, which were provided by parents/guardians, were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Examples included filled sandwiches, yogurt, pretzels and a variety of bite sized pieces of fruit. The atmosphere at the table was relaxed and happy.
- Each child had access to their own individually labelled water bottle throughout the morning. These were stored in a box positioned at the children's height where they could easily gain access to them.
- The children were observed throughout the morning accessing the sanitary area in groups. The adult was nearby to help with handwashing if required.
- Children's dignity and privacy was respected with the adult ensuring that only one child entered the toilet cubicles at a time.
- A fold down changing unit was available for nappy changing and single use aprons and gloves were stored underneath a unit in a drawer. A pedal operated, lined and lidded nappy bin was noted in the sanitary area for the hygienic disposal of used nappies. The adult stated that there were no children using nappies at the time of the inspection.
- A wooden library area offered rest facilities for the children to sit comfortably while reading in the area and two vinyl mats were available for children who wished to rest.

Supporting children's relationships:

- The adult was observed engaging positively with the children throughout the morning. During tabletop activities the adult was heard praising children's efforts and giving encouragement in relation to each child's chosen activity.
- Gentle reminders were heard reminding children to use helping hands and not pushing hands.
- Various methods of communication were stated as being in use to communicate and exchange information with parents/guardians. The adult stated in conversation that they speak with parents/guardians at drop off and collection times and that there was an instant group messaging system for parents/guardians and a digital application in use.

Physical and material environment:

The care room was laid out in clearly defined areas with play materials and resources which offered opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. Examples included:

- Sensory materials including playdough and sand were observed with children engaging in exploring the different textures.
- Pretend play resources such as vehicles, dolls houses, farm animals and a kitchen were accessible helping to develop the children's social, emotional, language and thinking skills whilst nurturing their imagination.
- Construction materials including magnetic shapes, coloured building blocks and puzzles were in use providing opportunities for exploration and problem solving.
- Art materials including coloured pencils, scraps of paper and scissors were readily available for creative development and practising fine motor skills.
- Equipment and resources were stored on low-level shelving around the care room making them easily accessible while promoting choice for the children and encouraging independence.
- The indoor hall play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children who were observed playing with a range of developmentally appropriate equipment which was provided in the fully enclosed area. Opportunities were provided for children to practice their gross motor skills of, cycling, running and jumping. Examples of the resources available included tractors, cars, rockers and ride-ons. A large wooden train was visible in the allocated outdoor play area along with a fairy garden.

Planning of activities:

- Ongoing observations, linked to both national frameworks of curriculum and quality, were documented for each child which helped create a complete, well-rounded picture of each child's progress and development. The adult stated that these observations informed the planning for the curriculum. The curriculum was observed to be flexible in accordance with the emerging interests of the children, their needs and preferences.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. The adult was heard singing action songs with the children including "Wind your bobbin".

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 care room was secured on arrival ensuring no unauthorised adults could enter. A glass panel on the care room door provided a visibility strip which enabled the manager to view who was at the door before opening it. A device was visible on the inside of the care room door ensuring that the children could not leave the service unsupervised.
- The three window handles were positioned at adult height making them inaccessible to the children.
- All toys and play equipment observed in use in the care room and in the indoor hall were observed to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Storage units in the care room were anchored preventing them from tipping or falling onto a child.
- Cleaning agents were stored in the kitchen on a high shelf out of reach of the children.
- The front outdoor play area was secured with fencing and was a safe distance from the main road.
- The three holes on the floor of the indoor hall were observed to have been repaired since the last inspection on 06 June 2022.

Infection Control:

- All wash hand basins in use by the adult and children were observed to be fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water recorded at 41.8°C. Dispensing soap, paper towels and pedal operated pedal bins were available for the disposal of paper waste in the sanitary area.

- Children were observed washing their hands before food, after toileting and coming in from the indoor hall play area.
- A fridge was available in the kitchen for storing perishable food.
- Tissues were observed in use for personal hygiene helping to prevent the spread of germs.
- Cleaning records were noted to be completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection.
- Temperature reducing medication, stored in its original bottle and stored on high shelf out of reach of the children was available in the event of an emergency. The expiry date was noted as 01/2027.

Safe Sleep:

- No children were observed sleeping in the sessional service. Two sleep mats were available in the event a child required a rest.

Fire Safety:

- The main fire exit door was fitted with a thumb twist cylinder enabling the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- The fire exit doors in the hall where the children have access to physical play equipment had recently had new fire doors installed, these were noted to be unobstructed and had lit signage indicating the location of the fire exit door in the event of a fire.
- The fire assembly point was located at the front gate of the community service.

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) A person trained as a First Aid Responder (FAR) was available while the pre-school children were present in the service. A letter by a FAR trainer was furnished to the inspector indicating that a second person in the service was booked to take part in training in July 2025.
- (2)
- (a) (b) The well stocked first aid box was easily accessible to the manager in the care room while the children were present in the service.

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) Written records of monthly fire drills were available in the service. The last fire drill recorded was dated 06 May 2025, with previous dates noted as 7 April 2025 and 11 March 2025.
- (b) Written records recording the number, type and maintenance records of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms were furnished to the inspector. The fire extinguisher certificate was dated 12 June 2024 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated June 2025.
- (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were displayed on a wall in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Non-Compliance Information

While a general insurance policy was for available for the community centre, with an expiry date of 10 March 2026, the inspector was unable to assess whether the service was adequately insured as the following details were missing from the policy:

- Number of children covered in the pre-school service
- Type of service covered
- Outings if applicable

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Additional information was sought to address the missing information, and these have been sent on by the insurance company. An annual review of the policy, with a checklist with the relevant requirements for the pre-school, will take place to ensure the information required for the pre-school service is included on the new policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

- A copy of the updated policy was received in the office of the inspectorate. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 28 have been addressed.