

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

USLA Identifier:	TU2015GY124
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Name of Service:	Knollcrest Nursery
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Address of Service:	Church Road, Moycullen, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 R6K6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Naoimh O'Dwyer
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	09/07/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	29	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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

The pre-school service is located on its own grounds in the village of Moycullen, Co. Galway. This private pre-school offers the options of full day care provision from 8.00hrs to 18.00hrs or part-time from 08.30hrs to 13.30hrs. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school and sessional care programmes are also offered from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs, from Monday to Friday. The pre-school caters for children aged between 2 years to 6 years of age. Additionally, an afterschool programme from 13.30hrs to 18.00hrs is offered to school aged children. There are 4 playrooms: the Green Zone playroom, Red Zone playroom, Blue Zone playroom, and Yellow Zone playroom. Three playrooms are converted for sleep provision after lunch with stackable beds and sleep mats available for older preschool children requiring sleep. The premise has its own kitchen, where children's main meals are prepared, cooked, and stored on site. The preschool children have access to various secure outdoor play areas at the front which includes an all-weather sheltered area, middle and side of the premises, for children's play activities, fresh air, and exploration. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on the children's emerging interests is provided with an element of Montessori.

Staffing

The registered provider is on the premises daily. There are a total of 13 staff currently working in the premises, this includes the registered provider. The registered provider is the named person in charge and there is a named designated manager and deputy. Documentary evidence indicates that 12 staff hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. Additionally, there is a designated chef and a student under the age of 18 years on a work experience placement. The staff have documentary evidence of on-going training and education. On the day of inspection, there were 6 staff working directly with the preschool children excluding the registered provider. The person in charge acted as childcare relief, assisted with kitchen duties and with the administration parts of the inspection.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 16, 17, 19, 20, 24, 25 and 28; 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. 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

(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 designated person in charge and there was a manager and a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived, and the registered provider arrived very shortly after and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)&(b) Twenty eight written validated references on file, in respect of the thirteen adults and one student were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the fourteen adults.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that three adults, who had lived outside the jurisdiction, for longer than 6 consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years, had the required police vetting.

(4) Twelve staff working directly with the children had evidence of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) Level 5 to Level 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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) On the day of inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children who attended on a part-time and full day care basis.

(2) On the morning of the inspection, there were 29 preschool children present.

- 2 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 27 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

Additionally, there were 8 school age children attending the summer camp programme.

There were 6 staff directly caring for these children.

The registered provider assisted with the administrative side of the inspection and also provided childcare relief, and a student on a college placement who was supervised at all times.

Additionally, a staff member who provides auxiliary assistance was on duty from 10.30 to 14.00hrs.

In the afternoon, of the inspection, there were 23 preschool children present.

- 1 children was aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 22 children were aged between 3 to 6 years.

There were five staff, directly caring for and supervising these children.

The registered provider assisted with the administration part of the inspection and provided childcare relief if required.

Additionally, there was a school aged programme with 8 children and 1 staff member designated to their care.

(8)(a) The staff roster indicated that more than two staff were available on the premises 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;

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(h) Details of children’s attendance was accurately recorded.

(i) A staff roster was available which demonstrated how breaks were covered.

(j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent, and a witness was required prior to administration of medication to a child.

(k) Details of accidents and incidents were recorded and there was evidence available that parents were informed following an accident or incident involving their child.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service displayed the required particulars in relation to Regulation 16 (a) to (f) at the entrance to the service. The required particulars in (g) were detailed in the service’s booklet and the policies and procedures were shared with parents on request. A record of communications is shared with parents prior to and when the children commence in the service, this information was reviewed by the inspector.

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)

Basic Needs

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack and meals without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- A healthy eating policy was available on request. The children had spaghetti bolognese and vegetables for their main meal with milk and water to drink. The staff offered extra servings if the children were hungry for more.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children’s ages and stage of development.
- The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing and toileting and toilet training.
- On the day of the inspection, there were two children from the Blue room, who required nappy changing and were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained.

- The older children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
For example:
 - assigning a key person to each child;
 - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
 - being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
 - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop off and collection times, newsletters and via profile scrapbooks. Staff observations, a child’s milestones and individual learning stories were captured in the profile scrap book. There were learning template and developmental checklists showing the child’s strengths, interests, and developmental care needs.
- The children were observed to free play, at construction building, connecting, at sensory play, at pretend kitchen / house, and sorting stacking materials. The children played games and puzzles. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles. The children fed, and dressed baby dolls, played with small world furniture, little people and dolls. The enjoyed art and craft work including painting, playdough, glitter, and sensory play. The outdoor areas, the children were observed climbing the activity centre, hiding in the tunnel, at role play, playing on transport vehicles, balancing on beams at sand play, digging, running, chasing, sorting, and exploring.

Supporting Relationships

- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children’s feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children’s actions and other’s responses. In all the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.

- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child’s activities and initiating games and activities. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff responded to the younger children in a timely and appropriate way when they were crying or when becoming upset.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children’s inclusion. For example, the inspectors noted that the staff acknowledged a child’s engagement in an activity ‘that is great’ ‘well done’ and used questions such as ‘what should we do next?’, ‘is there any other way to do this?’, to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours.

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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

(b) Where no such space is provided, the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis to a suitable outdoor space.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

- The space in the five playrooms was designed and arranged to: maintain a space that is clean, organised, and free of clutter. The rooms accommodate children individually, in small groups and in a large group.

They were divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support children's play and learning.

- The design, organisation and resourcing of the environment supported each child's wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.
 - The environment was comfortable, inviting and laid out to accommodate the needs of all children and staff in the pre-school.
 - Staff had a comfortable place to sit, to hold and feed infants, and to read, interact and comfort children.
 - Staff encouraged the children to interact and to engage with a range of materials, activities, equipment in the indoor and outdoor environment, based on the child's needs, choices, interests and age and stage of development.
 - The children had access to enough varied materials and equipment, which were rotated to suit the changing programme, to suit current and new interests.
 - There were different interest areas provided, where equipment and materials of similar use were arranged or grouped together.
 - There were play materials with a variety of colours, textures, shapes, and sizes to experiment with and explore that were freely available in the service. For examples: construction and building materials such as stacking shapes, links, connectors, threading material, bricks, and blocks. There were problem solving items such as puzzles, counters, timers, links, matching cards, games, and jigsaws. There were measuring and pouring items, such as scoops, jugs, cartons, and containers. There were role play areas such as kitchens, shops, houses with utensils and furniture. There were hairdressing hair heads, accessories and dress up clothing. There were creative play areas with a selection of art and craft materials including paints, glue, pencils, crayons, and paper. There were soft toys, shapes, books, animals, rainbow ponies, dolls, action figures, and doctors' sets. There were age and stage appropriate furniture, themed shaped furniture, rocking and musical toys. There were library book areas.
 - Displayed on the walls were visual aids, posters, educational materials, and children's artwork. There were daily schedules, pictorial displays of the daily routine and planning charts and samples of children's artwork.
- (b) There were cosy areas with soft seating, in each of the playrooms. The service converted three playrooms for the provision of sleep for the children with floor mats, mattresses and stackable beds.

(3)(a) Outdoor area

- The outdoor environment provided children with activities and opportunities for fresh air, discovery, relaxing physical exercise and play (e.g., jumping, climbing).
- The service balanced the need for safety with the need to provide physical, challenging experiences for children. The areas were secured by walls and fencing and covered with grass, impact absorbing slabs, tarmac and concrete pathways.
- The staff advised that the outdoor areas were an extension of the indoor playrooms and linked with the learning that goes on inside. On the day of inspection, all the children had opportunities to be outside, as often as possible.
- There were four outdoor play areas.

Area 1

- The outdoor play area to the front of the premises was covered with a combination of grass and bark. The area was surrounded by fencing and gates. Items included a playhouse, swings, goalpost, footballs, tractor tyres, a bench, balance beams and a large wooden sand box with utensils.

Area 2

- The outdoor play area to the middle of the premises was covered with a combination of bark and impact absorbing surfaces. The area was secure with fencing, walls, and gates. There was an all-weather sheltered area for the children to play and explore.
- There was a mud kitchen, pots and pans, a climbing activity frame with slide, tricycles, trucks, balance beams, playhouse, a music wall, an art table, tents, and wooden seating.

Area 3

- Was situated adjacent to the Blue Zone playroom. The area had an all-weather sheltered area and an open area. It had an artificial grass covering and concrete slab tiles.
- Items included a slide, balls, tricycles, tractors, a table with building blocks, a table with dolls and play materials, a kitchen with pots and pans, a steering wheel connected to the fence for imaginary fun, trucks, cars, a castle, balance pots and posters on the fence with, numbers, and butterflies.

Area 4

- Was situated adjacent to the Red Zone playroom. The area had a combination of concrete slab tiles, tarmac paths and bark. The area was secure with fencing and gates.
 - Items included a water tank with jugs and buckets, bicycles, tricycles, cars, trucks, and stations. There was a bug hotel, a fairy meeting place, a planting area, nature area with acorns, a construction area with gravel and stones, watering cans, tables, chairs, a bridge set in bark and tyres.

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:

- There was a buzzer access system, into the main entrance front doors.
- The staff only areas, kitchen, staff sanitary area and storage areas were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout both buildings were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after nappy changing, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- There were two designated nappy changing units with a designated wash hand basin. The children in nappies were changed in a timely manner, on a regular basis. Staff involved in nappy changing wore a disposable apron and gloves. There were a foot pedalled airtight sealable bins for the disposal of nappies.
- Staff advised of the sterilisation procedures for infants feeding equipment and soothers.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The playrooms were observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.

Administration of Medication:

- Following discussion and observation the staff demonstrated that they were aware of the correct procedures for the administration of medicines.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were observed sleeping on demand following cues and signs of tiredness. The infants and toddlers were observed sleeping while staff members supervised by staying in the rooms. After the main

meal children were observed sleeping on stackable beds and floor mats in the blue zone and Yellow zone playrooms.

- There was a safe sleep policy available on request.
- Sleep records were kept for each child's sleep, recording the time an adult physically checks a child, and their signature. Additionally, the records included a sleeping child's colour, position, breathing and the temperature of the sleep room with the opportunity to document any necessary remedial actions taken.
- All linen provided was clean, dry, and stored in labelled containers.
- Rest and relaxation areas were provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit signage and assembly points were noted.
- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the building.

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) The children's arrival and departure times were recorded on a daily basis. The attendance records were reviewed by the inspectors on the service's electronic application system.

(3)(a)(b) A written record was available at the service entrance for persons not referred to in particulars (i) to (iv) to record their details and reason for visiting the 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 in first aid was available on the premises at all times for the children attending the preschool service. Four staff had up to date First Aid Responder first aid training.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box with ample supplies safely stored, easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in each playroom and the kitchen.

(b) The first aid boxes were fully equipped, with content items in date and available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available for the full day care service with cover for a maximum of 72 preschool children and an expiry date of 27/03/2025.