

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY124
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Name of Service:	Knoll crest 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:	23/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	26
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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, 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

Knollcrest Nursery is a purpose-built premises within the village of Moycullen, county Galway. The service offers a full day care service for children ranging in age from 2 to 6 years, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. Part-time care is offered from 08.30 to 13.30. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school and sessional care programme are also offered from 9.00 to 12.00, from Monday to Friday. The programme of care and learning is facilitated in 5 playrooms- The Green Zone (Montessori (age range 3- 5 years), Yellow Zone Montessori (age range 3-4 years), Blue Zone (age range 2- 3 years) and Red Zone (age range 2-3 years). School aged childcare is facilitated in the service each afternoon in The Den playroom. Three playrooms were converted after lunch for sleep provision with stackable beds and sleep mats available for the children and individual bed linen. There are 4 designated outdoor play areas located to the front, rear and middle courtyard of the premises including an all-weather sheltered area. The service has a cook. They prepare, cook, serve and store the main meals and afternoon snacks onsite.

Staffing

A total of 15 adults were working in the service. Twelve adults and 1 student over the age of 18 who was supervised at all times were working in the preschool service. Twelve adults held appropriate qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. Additionally, 2 adults worked in the school age after school programme, one of whom works as the cook in the mornings. The adults had records on file of engagement in continuing professional development.

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. 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, manager 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 person in charge. A manager was available to deputise in the absence of the registered provider.

(b) The registered provider and the deputy were available during the inspection.

(2) Fifteen files were available in respect of the registered provider, manager, 10 staff who work directly with the preschool children, cook, school age personnel, student and school age staff member.

The findings included the following:

(a) Twenty of the required 30 written and validated references from past employers were available for the adults and student working in the service.

(b) Ten of the required 30 written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available in respect of the adults employed by the service.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 15 adults including the student currently working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for 4 adults working in the service who had lived and worked in another state for a period longer than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Twelve adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2) On the 23/10/2025, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the service.
Eight adults cared for the 49 preschool children attending the service in the morning, additionally the registered provider and the manager assisted with childcare relief. There was also a student providing care to the children.
Four adults cared for 26 preschool children in the afternoon, additionally the registered provider and manager provided relief as required. There was also a student providing care to the children.
- (8)(a) The staff roster indicated that 2 adults were on the premises during the operation of the service from Monday to Friday.

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 of the Children:

- There was a healthy eating policy available in the service if requested. The snacks and meals provided were varied and nutritious. Mealtime was observed to be a sociable and unhurried occasion. The adults and children conversed easily together at their tables.
- Water was accessible to the preschool children in all playrooms; they could take a drink at any time they wished to do so.
- Children were encouraged to be independent with their personal belongings, while having their lunches and drinks and while using the toilet. The children's individual cues for assistance were responded to promptly and in a sensitive manner.
- The children had the freedom to move around and play in each of the defined interest areas in each playroom.
- Nappy changing was carried out as required while the staff maintained the privacy and dignity of the children. The older children were able to independently attend the toilet and supervision was provided by the adults as required.

Supporting Relationships

- The service operated an open-door policy and the adults communicated informally with parents upon the children's arrival and collection from the service.
- The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner. Positive behavioural strategies were used during all interactions with the children.
- The children guided the programme of learning and were supported by the adults in individual and group activities. The adults facilitated the session in a calm and respectful manner and demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests and preferences.

- The children were notified in advance of transitions in the programme and the changes in activities were completed with ease by the children.
- The children were observed at tabletop activities, in circle time, listening to stories, some children were making Halloween arts and crafts, while some children were observed building blocks at construction while others wore costumes and played imagination games.
- The children were observed playing outdoors with transport vehicles, while some children played with water and some children played with building blocks and footballs.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The indoor playrooms were well planned with distinct interest areas that offered space for challenging and varying types of play and learning activities. Low level tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities and for dining at mealtime.
- The areas of interest included a rest and reading area. This area was stocked with a range of reading materials and provided a relaxing space for use by the children. Additional play areas included a dress up area, arts and crafts, a construction area, messy play areas, creative and imagination areas, a home and shop corner and shelving with Montessori based play and educational based materials and equipment. These areas were extensively resourced and accessible to all the children.
- The walls displayed local community areas and photographs of the children and their families, other areas had literacy, numerical and alphabetical learning aids, children's individual creations, family trees, visual prompts to wash hands, emotions, little helpers and curriculum planning displays.
- Each playroom was equipped with soft seating, matting and cushions for the children to sit, rest and relax if they chose to.

The Outdoor play areas

- The outdoor play areas offered a large space for the children to play and move freely. The outdoor areas were situated to the front, rear and middle courtyard of the premises were suitably resourced with a large range of play equipment and materials.
- The areas were well resourced with a wide range of toys and materials offering opportunities for fine and gross motor skill development for all ages attending the service.
- The areas were well secured with high fencing, gates and walls.

Programme of Activities

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians, conduct observations to support each child’s developmental needs.
- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children’s choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities. The staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
- The children got to choose on a choice board what activity they wish to play with and choose a photograph and place it on the board to depict what they wish to engage in each day.
- Visual displays of the childrens daily activities were displayed in each playroom which assisted with the smooth transition of the programme of care.
- Each child had a book of creations with their own artwork and colouring enclosed. The children had a scrap book or learning journal with themed activities, photographs and observations. An example of the themes to date included, Get to Know me, My Family, All about me, My Knollcrest Family, Road Safety and Halloween. These journals/books went home to parents and guardians at the end of each school term. Additionally, the Green Zone playroom demonstrated a class journal which was on display for review “Our Learning Journal”.
- The emerging interests were recorded on a board to inform the short-term planning and emerging interests of children.
- Transitions between activities were well planned by staff and were carried out in a calm and relaxed environment. Good communication between adults in planning activities was observed.
- The service programme of activity and curriculum which was in place supported the individual needs of each child in line with their age and stage of development. The curriculum was based on different models of best practice in early childhood education.

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 entrance to the service was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor play areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within.
- A record sheet was available to record any visitor that entered the service and all staff and childrens attendance was recorded daily.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- Medication was stored out of reach of the preschool children at all times.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. Cleaning schedules were maintained demonstrating the frequency and measures taken to clean the service.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals. This included after messy play, using the toilet, blowing their nose and before mealtimes.
- Additionally, there were outdoor wash hand basins available for the children and staff while in the outdoor play areas to the front, rear and middle of the building.
- There was one designated nappy changing area with 2 changing units, clean and intact changing mats, a blind to provide dignity and privacy at all times. The staff had access to aprons and gloves at all times.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- Documentation was available detailing parental consent and a parental signature after medication was administered to children in the service.
- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's administration of medication procedure and policy.

Safe Sleep:

- The adults demonstrated an awareness of the service's safe sleep policy.
- Children aged 2-3 years of age from the blue zone playrooms were settled to sleep in their individual standard low-level beds and floor mats. Additionally, the children over 3 years of age who required a sleep or rest came to the yellow zone or red zone playroom after lunch. These rooms were converted for sleep provision. The staff members remained in the rooms while supervising the children at all times.

- A thermometer was available in the designated sleep rooms where the adults could monitor the room temperatures. The room temperatures were maintained between the required temperature of 16 °C to 20°C.
- The adults recorded the sleeping children's observations every 10 minutes during sleep periods as per the service safe sleep policy.

Fire Safety:

- The staff and children complete monthly fire drill drills.
- The adults and children readily identified the fire assembly point at the front of the building.
- The fire exits and passageways were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

Outing:

- No outings occurred on the day of inspection.

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) Four adults working directly with the children held records of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.
- (2)(a) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored in accessible and conspicuous positions throughout the building.
- (b) The first aid box was available in the service kitchen and each playroom for use by the adults in the event of an accident or emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-
- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and
 - (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) A record for completed monthly fire drills was available. The most recent fire drill took place on the 17/09/2025.
- (b) Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system maintenance service took place respectively on the 22/08/2025.
- (4) Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed at both entry/exit points and each playroom in the building.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for 85 children attending the service. The policy was valid until 27 March 2026.