

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY233
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Name of Service:	Spraoi Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Boland's Court, Gort, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 TK8X
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Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Murphy
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	39
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan
Title:	Early Years Inspector.

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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).

Description of service

Spraoui early learning centre is in a private residential area, in the centre of the town of Gort, Co Galway. The service offers a full day care programme from 08.00 to 18.00, from Monday to Friday, which caters for children aged between 0 and 6 years of age. The service also offers a part time and sessional service. There are four playrooms which include a Nursery room, Wobbler room, Toddler room and Preschool room. Rest areas are provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate children to rest or relax during the day. The service also has 2 designated sleep rooms with a total of 10 cots for children less than 2 years of age to sleep. Additionally, there are 8 sleep beds and sleep mats for children over 2 years of age. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals for children are prepared and heated. The outdoor play areas are located at the front and side of the pre-school for children.

Staffing

The manager is the person in charge and a deputy manager was also available. The area manager was working in the service on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work on the premises. There is a total of 13 adults currently working in the premises which includes the manager, area manager, student and an adult working in the kitchen. The student on placement was supervised at all times during the inspection by qualified staff. 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:

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- 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The manager was the person in charge and a deputy manager was available to deputise in their absence.

- (b) The roster indicated that there was a designated person in charge and a deputy in charge while the pre-school children were on the premises.

(2) All adult files 14 in total were reviewed which included the registered provider and a student:

- (a) Eighteen of the required 28 written and validated references were from past employers.
- (b) Ten of the required 28 written and validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 14 adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.

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- (d) International police vetting was available for 12 adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than 6 months.
- (4) There was evidence that 11 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to a level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent. The remaining three adults did not require childcare qualifications.
- (7)(a) Documentation was available to evidence that all adults received induction in line with the service policy.

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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children on the day.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 9 adults working directly with 39 children in the morning and 9 adults working with 38 children in the afternoon. There was also a student rostered and in the playrooms during the inspection.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least two adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

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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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

19(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The healthy eating policy was available for parents and guardians to view. The snacks and hot meal served on the day of inspection were healthy and nutritious. Spaghetti and meatballs was the main hot meal of the day.
- Crockery and plates were offered and used during children's snack times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Perishable items belonging to preschool children were stored in the service fridges.
- Children attending the service who were toilet trained, toileted independently or with some assistance or support by adults as required.
- Younger children in nappies had them changed by adults in a timely and caring manner. The adults were observed to caring out the nappy changing in line with the service policy. Adults were observed picking up on childrens toileting cues throughout the day.
- The children's self-care was assisted and encouraged by adults for example to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after outdoor play and after messy play.
- In the playrooms the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size couch in a designated cosy area.
- There were 2 designated sleep rooms for children under 2 years of age. Sleep beds were used. Each bed was dressed in clean linen and extra clean linen was available. Every child had a sleep plan signed by their parents. The playrooms were converted into a sleep room during the day and children over 2 years slept on sleep mats.

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Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- 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 and to 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 adults sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
- Transitions between activities were well planned by adults 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 models of best practice in early childhood education. The themes of the week were 'World Book Day'.
- Children were observed in free play, the outdoor play area, group activities, playing in the clearly defined interest areas, tabletop activities and at art work.

- (3) Adults were observed to be respectful and caring in their interactions with children throughout the inspection. No practices were observed that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive or physically harmful to children.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Three adults had first aid responder with an in-date certificate.
- (2)(a) The first aid boxes were easily accessible and stored in conspicuous positions in the office and playrooms.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available while the children were attending the pre-school service.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the inspection the area manager, manager and staff ensured that the preschool children were adequately supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments.

The adult child ratio was maintained in each playroom and in the outdoor play area. This was evidenced by the staff roster and observations by the inspector on the day.

To reduce the risk of a child leaving the service unsupervised the service had implemented a head count before going out to the outdoor area and a check prior to returning to the playrooms. This was to ensure that all children were accounted for in the outdoor area.

It was observed on the day that the staff ensured that children were supervised during sleep, mealtimes, in the playrooms, in the outdoor play area, while children used the sanitary areas and during nappy changing. The staff were observed to supervise children by sound and by sight.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had valid insurance cert which was in date to the 27 March 2027.