

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY234
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Name of Service:	Socrates Learning Ltd t/a Spraioi Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	Bealach Na Gaoithe, Galway Road, Tuam, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H54 CD51
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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:	15/01/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	29
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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.
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Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and A. Mc Carthy.
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors.
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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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

This privately owned crèche was opened under the present management in 2015. This service is in a residential area, in the town of Tuam, Co Galway. There are six playrooms which include The Owls, The Chicks, The Monkeys, The Bumble Bees, The Tigers and The Butterflies. Rest areas are provided in each of the playrooms to facilitate children to rest or relax during the day. There is a designated kitchen where the main meals for children are prepared. There is a secured outdoor play area located at the rear of the service for children to play. The service offers a full day care programme from 8 am to 6 pm, from Monday to Friday, which caters for children aged between 0 to 6 years of age. The service also offers a part time and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) preschool care programme and a sessional care programme.

Staffing

The service has a manager who is the person in charge and is on the premises daily. The registered provider does not work on the premises with the children daily. There is a total of 13 adults currently working in the premises which includes a student, the area manager and manager. The registered provider does not work in the service.

Methodology

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

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

The findings on inspection are based on:

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

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9,11, 19,23, 25, 26 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

(a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,

(b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,

(c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(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 manager was the designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.
- (b) The manager and deputy manager were on the premises when the early years inspectors arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.
- (c) Staff rosters, policies and signage evidence indicated that there was a clear management structure in the service, which identified the lines of authority and accountability within the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

All 14 adult files were reviewed including a student and the registered providers.

- (2)(a)&(b) Twenty-eight of the validated references on file in respect of 14 adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 14 adults. This was in adherence with the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

- (d) Documentary evidence indicated that 10 adults had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting. The police vetting was available for inspection.
- (4) Eleven adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the eleven adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) One adult working directly with children, did not hold one of the following or have evidence of:
 - A minimum award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, in Early Childhood Care and Education or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
 - An exemption from the qualification requirement and confirmation that the Minister accepts this exemption.
 - The qualification requirement or relevant specialist training and the basis on which the capitation may be used for a person employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM), detailed in an exemption letter from Pobal.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member in question has received the letter of recognition. This staff member also no longer works within the setting. The human resource department and area manager will ensure that all vetting procedures are followed in future prior to a staff member starting in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

The service submitted evidence that the staff member holds a minimum award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, in Early Childhood Care and Education.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectors have reviewed the photographic evidence submitted and has deemed it has met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children specified was maintained.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 30 children present

- 20 children were aged between 1 to 3 years,
- 10 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.
- There were 6 staff directly caring for these children.

Additionally, a staff member was designated to kitchen duties, preparing, and serving the service meals.

In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 29 children present

- 19 children were aged between 1 to 3 years,
- 10 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were 6 staff directly caring for these children.

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

19 (1) (a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. At 10:30 am, the snacks were provided by parents or guardians and perishable items were stored in the fridge.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Crockery and plates were used to children during snack times.
- The children had access to a water on a low-level table, that allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Hand washing was observed prior to snack time, after outdoor play and toileting.
- Each child's privacy and dignity were respected, while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couches, in a designated rest and relaxation area, in the playrooms.
- Stackable beds were available and were used on the day for rest and sleep for children.
- A designated sleeproom with seven cots was available for children under 2 years of age.
- Children were observed at table top activities, making their pirate ships, playing in the clearly defined interest area and in circle time.
- Children were observed in the outdoor play area throughout the day.

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 door into the pre-school was secure to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exiting by a pre-school child.
- The external outdoor play area was secured by means of a fence.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible and out of children's reach.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.

Infection Control:

- There was antibacterial liquid soap at the wash hand basins to facilitate hygienic hand washing. There were disposable paper towels in the dispensers in the sanitary areas used by the children to facilitate hygienic hand drying.
- There were three designated nappy changing areas in the building which were maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.
- Staff involved in the serving of food and nappy changing used disposable aprons and gloves when nappy changing.
- The children's barrier creams were clearly individually labelled, stored within a sealed container and in an allocated box in the nappy changing areas.
- The service displayed evidence of suitable sterilisation practices for infant's soothers for children.
- Tabletops and work surfaces were cleaned with disposable paper towels and disinfectant spray.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were inaccessible and out of children's reach. Medications examined were within date.

- The staff demonstrated their knowledge of best practice with regards to the safe storage, administration of and documentation requirement for any medication given in the premises.

Safe Sleep:

- There was 1 designated sleep room with 7 standard sized cots. Additionally, stackable and sleep beds were available for older children who required sleep.
- Children were observed sleeping on demand throughout the period of inspection.
- Children under 2 years of age were observed sleeping on demand, in their individual age-appropriate grow bag.
- There was a safe sleep policy that detailed temperature, lighting, ventilation, space between cots and child safety requirements as per the safe sleep for under 2's best practice guidelines for childcare services policy.
- Documented records were available of each child's sleep, which record the time an adult physically checks a child, and the 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.
- The inspectors observed and documentary evidence indicated that the staff physically checked sleeping children every 10 minutes.
- A thermometer was available in the sleep room and used as the method of recording the sleep room temperature which allowed for remedial action when temperatures were above 20 °C and below 16 °C.
- A supply of clean linen was available, dry, clean, and stored in a large secure cupboard. The linen was changed, washed and a cleaning record maintained.
- Rest and quiet 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 to.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were recorded and documented for inspection.

Outing:

- The service does not carry out outings.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Wipeable mattresses were not provided in 6 of the 7 cots and some of the mattresses were stained which may pose as a risk of cross infection for a preschool child.

- The 3 bins in the nappy changing area were not suitable, they were not leaking proof, self-sealing, pedal operated nappy changing bins and this may pose as a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated in their response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The six mattresses have been replaced with six wipeable mattresses. We will ensure that new wipeable mattresses and cots are checked daily before being set up.
- The three nappy bins have been replaced with ones that are leaking proof, self-sealing, pedal operated nappy changing bins to prevent the risk of cross infection. Nappy changing bins will be checked daily to ensure bins are working correctly by both staff and manager.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate. This was reviewed and has been deemed to have met the requirements of this part of the Regulations.

Summary Comment

1 & 2 The evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early years Inspectors and has been deemed to have met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations.

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 2 adults trained in first aid responder for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) The service had a first aid box with content items in date. It was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the main office on the ground floor.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid box was fully equipped and available to the children attending the pre-school 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 firefighting 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 in writing of fire drills indicated that the last fire drill was conducted on the 03/01/2025.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that firefighting equipment was checked annually. Records confirmed that the firefighting equipment was serviced on the 25/07/2024 and the fire detection and smoke alarms were maintained annually, the last date of maintenance was on the 25/07/2024.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire was available on file and was displayed in the lobby of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service has insurance for 65 preschool children valid until the 27/03/2025.