

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY235
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Name of Service:	Spraoi Early Learning Centre
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Address of Service:	May Cahill House, Crowe Street, Gort, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 DR60
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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:	12/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	41
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan and B. Lavin.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors.

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 service is located on the main street in the town of Gort in south County Galway. The service offers the option of full day care and part time care provision from 07.00 to 18:30 and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care programme from 09.00 to 12.00, from Monday to Friday. The service caters for pre-school children between the ages of 2 and 6 years of age. The service has three playrooms- the Giraffe room, Elephants room and Lions room on the ground floor. The premises also has a staff office and a staff kitchen for breaks. The outdoor play area is to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service currently employs eight adults, which includes the manager, area manager, general manager and a cook working in the kitchen. The registered provider does not work in the service and is not detailed on the staff roster.

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

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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 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, 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.

(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;
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise.

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

(c) A management structure was available in the service and staff were aware of their roles and

responsibilities.

Since the last inspection on the 28 March 2025 five new adult recruitment files were reviewed:

- (2)(a) There were 8 of the required 10 written and validated references from previous employers.
- (b) There were 2 of the required 10 written and validated references from a source other than past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all eight adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) International police vetting was available for five adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months and these were available for inspection.
- (4) There was evidence that 7 adults who required a childcare qualification had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.
- (7) (a, c) Five new adults in the service had Induction & Supervision records. These were kept in writing and were signed and dated by each staff member.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the following policies and procedures were in place as per schedule 5 for the service. The policies, procedures and statements were consistent with the service practices.

- (a) Statement of purpose and function
- (b) Complaints policy
- (j) Accident and incident policy
- (q) Risk management policy
- (u) Staff supervision policy

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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 of inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to.
There were 7 adults working directly with 41 children on the day of inspection in the morning and afternoon.
- (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 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.*

Compliance Information

(15)(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i).

Out of the 66 children registered in the service a sample of 10 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent and accurate.

The 10 sampled records of children contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation/permissions for collecting the child.

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- Details are recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
- The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.
- A record of any immunisations the child has had.
- Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was/is an emergency.

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:

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(k) A sample of 15 accident, injury or incident records involving pre-school children attending the service were reviewed. The records reviewed detailed a signed parental signature after the accident/incident occurred.

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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 children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack and hot meal in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Cutlery and plates were given to children during snack times. Perishable items were stored in the service fridge belonging to children.
- The children had access to a water on a low-level table in the playrooms which allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported by adults 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 when using the toilet or with some assistance as required from adults.
- Adults ensured that children who were in nappies had them changed as required throughout the day. Adults were observed talking and singing to children during nappy changing. The correct nappy changing procedure was observed in line with the service policy.
- 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 for rest and sleep for children over 2 years of age. The Giraffe playroom was converted into a sleep room after lunch. Staff remained in the playroom during sleep and physical sleep checks were carried out every 10 minutes by adults.

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- Children were observed at tabletop activities, playing in the clearly defined interest areas and in circle time. Children were engaged in messy, imaginary and sensory play. Children played in large and small groups. Children led and chose most of the activities with the support of the adults.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- 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 in relation to each child's development and to support children to achieve their milestones.
- Information for parents was provided at collection and drop off times, via text messages, multimedia application and by phone calls.
- Staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them and responded to their requests. The staff interacted in a positive way with the children e.g. they sat at the children's level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and a good understanding of each child.
- The adults engaged in a positive way to help children find positive solutions to minor issues. Depending on the child's ability they were encouraged to think about their behaviour, the impact it had on others and how to say sorry when they were in the wrong.
- Transitions between activities were well planned by staff and were carried out in a calm and relaxed environment.
- Staff communicated effectively in a professional manner as they carried out their programme of care throughout the day.

- (3) The inspectors did not witness or hear any practices, throughout the period of inspection, which were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally, physically harmful or neglectful in respect of the early years children attending the service. Adults were observed to be kind and caring in their interactions with children. Communication and interactions between adults and children were conducted in a positive, sensitive and caring manner.

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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 for children was available to the children attending the pre-school service. Two adults had an in-date certificate as a first aid responder.
- (2)(a) There was a first aid box in the main office, with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*
- (2) *The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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 08/02/2026.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that firefighting equipment was checked annually. Records confirmed that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 10/07/2025 and the fire detection and smoke alarms system were maintained annually, the last date of maintenance was on 04/08/2025.

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- (2)(c) The fire records required in paragraph (1) were available for review in the service.
- (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 displayed in the service.

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

The registered provider ensured that during the inspection all children were appropriately supervised, when attending the service in the Elephant, Giraffes and Lions playrooms. Supervision by adults both by sight and sound occurred during the inspection to ensure children's safety. The adults were observed supervising children in the outdoor play area and indoors at toileting, nappy changing, in the playrooms and at sleep time in the designated sleep area.