

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY236
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Name of Service:	Spraoi Early Learning Centre NUIG
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Address of Service:	NUIG, 50 Upper Newcastle, Newcastle, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 A2KE
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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:	18/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	98	PM	98
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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 (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. M and F Mc D.
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).

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Description of service

This full day care service is in a purpose-built premises on the grounds of the University of Galway (UG), in upper Newcastle, Galway city. This private service offers the options of full day care and part time care from 07.45 to 18.30 and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care and sessional care programme from 09.00 to 12.30, from Monday to Friday. The preschool caters for children aged between 0 months and 6 years of age. There is a total of nine playrooms over three floors in the service which include the Chicks, Lambs and Owls playrooms all on the ground floor, the Hippos, Lions, Giraffes, Elephants playrooms all on the first floor, the Butterflies and Ladybirds playrooms on the second floor. There are also sanitary facilities, a main office and a staff room on the premises. The pre-school children have access to various secure outdoor play areas to the rear and side of the premises, for children's play activities and fresh air.

Staffing

The manager is the person in charge and there was a named deputy manager to deputise as required. The area manager was based in the service on the day. The registered provider does not work on the premises with the children daily. There is a total of 26 adults employed in the service which includes the manager, area manager, an adult in the kitchen and two school aged adults.

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

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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 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.*

(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)

On the 18th May 2026, the manager was the person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The area manager, service manager and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

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(2)

Twenty-six files were reviewed in respect of the registered provider, area manager, service manager, cook, 2 students over the age of 18 on Erasmus placement and 20 childcare workers were employed in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Thirty-three written validated references were available were sourced from a past employer.

(b)

Nineteen written validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures was available in respect of 24 adults and 2 students employed by the service. 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 in respect of 22 adults employed in the service where the person had lived in another State for a period longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Twenty-three adults who required childcare qualifications working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 and Level 9 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(7)(a)

A sample of six adults supervision records were reviewed. These were fully completed. Induction was carried out for all staff prior to having access to preschool children.

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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.*
- (6A) *Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model.*
- (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 21 adults and 2 students on placement working directly with 98 children in the morning and afternoon.
- (6A) An adult is employed in the service under the Access and Inclusion Model.
- (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 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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

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

Compliance Information

(1)(i) The inspectors were furnished with a staff roster which included all staff working in the service on a daily basis.

(k) Ten accident, incident and injury forms were sampled since January 2026. This was reviewed and the forms were completed and signed by staff and the parents.

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 had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating on the child size couches in designated cosy areas in each of the playrooms.
- There was 2 designated sleeprooms for children under 2 years of age and floor beds were available in the playrooms. There was also stackable beds for children over 2 years of age which were in use in the playrooms after lunch. Children were supervised by adults who remained in the designated sleep rooms and in the playrooms while the children were asleep.

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- Physical sleep checks were recorded every 10 minutes on sleeping children and recorded on the service multimedia childcare application.
- Sleep plans were carried out for children under 2 years of age who were sleeping on sleep beds. These were prepared in conjunction with the parents.
- Parents supplied the snacks and the service supplied the hot meal of the day which was beef keema and rice. The service supplied an alternative hot meal, based on the dietary requirements of the children.
- The children's drinks bottles and beakers of water were available in the playrooms and outdoor area to allow a child to self-serve.
- The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and adults.
- Appropriate cutlery and plates were provided for children based on their age and stage of development at meal and snack times to enhance the social experience for the children.
- Older children who were toilet trained, either toileted independently or with some assistance as required by the adults.
- Children had their nappies changed in a designated nappy changing area as required throughout the day. Adults were observed to interact with children in a positive way, engaging in conversation and singing nursery rhymes.
- Adult engagement with children was found to be supportive, caring and they encouraged children to find positive solutions to minor issues.
- All children had the opportunity to go outside for fresh air and play activities. Children were observed to move freely in the playrooms in and out of special interest areas.

Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- Each child had a detailed learning journal showing their art and crafts, themes and development for the year.
- 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 and adults. Adults were caring and supportive in their interactions with children.

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- The theme of the week was 'Sports' and children were involved in physical activities in the outdoor play area. Children also discussed with the adults what sports they had watched and danced to music in the playrooms.
- 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 models of best practice in early childhood education.
- The activities observed were both adult and child led, both indoors and outdoors with an emphasis on the children's emerging interests, wellbeing and development.

19(3) The inspector 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.

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. Four adults had current training in first aid response for children.
- (2)(a) The two first aid boxes were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service.
- (b) The service demonstrated that the first aid boxes were fully equipped with all contents within expiry dates and were available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 06 May 2026.

(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 took place respectively on the 18th June 2025 and 18th February 2026.

(4)

A fire action notice was displayed demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

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 120 pre-school children. The insurance policy for the full day care service was valid until the 27th March 2027.