

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY236			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Spraoi Early Learning Centre NUIG			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	NUIG, 50 Upper Newcastle, Newcastle, Co. Galway			
<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 A2KE			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Theresa Murphy			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
<b>Dates of Inspection:</b>	30/09/2025			
	01/10/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<b>AM</b>	90	<b>PM</b>	90
		90		91
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building,  Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor),  Merlin Park Hospital,  Galway.			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Meehan and Friel.			
<b>Title:</b>	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

## 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 7.45am to 6.30pm and an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care and sessional care programme from 9 am to 12.30 pm, from Monday to Friday. The preschool caters for children aged between 0 months and 6 years of age. There are 9 playrooms over 3 floors. The Chicks, Lambs and Owls playrooms are all on the ground floor, the Hippos, Lions, Giraffes, Elephants playrooms are all on the first floor, the Butterflies and Ladybirds playrooms are on the second floor. The pre-school children have access to 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 general manager was based in the service on both days and the area manager was present on day 2 of the inspection. The registered provider does not work on the premises with the children daily.

On day 1 there were 23 adults working on the premises which included the general manager and the manager.

On day 2 there were 22 adults working on the premises which included the general manager, area manager and manager.

## 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 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.

## Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the general manager, area 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
- (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;

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a person in charge and a named person was available to deputise in the service.

(b) The person in charge was on the premises for the duration of the inspection on both days.

Documentary evidence indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available on the premises when the pre-school children were present.

(c) A clear management structure was in place, each adult's roles and responsibilities were displayed in the service.

- (2) There were 5 new adults employed since the previous inspections carried out on the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> August 2025.
- (a) Seven of the 10 validated references on file were from a past employer.
  - (b) Three remaining validated references were from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 5 new adults demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew garda vetting every 3 years.
  - (d) Overseas police vetting disclosures were available on file for 5 adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) There was evidence that the 5 adults working directly with the children had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or qualifications deemed to be equivalent.
- (7)(a) Evidence was available that all 5 adults had received induction training which included all policies of the service, each staff members role in the service, the governance structure, grievance and disciplinary procedures, code of behaviour and mandatory training required. A staff handbook was available. Documented evidence was available for these staff that they had signed and received training in the following policies:
- Complaints.
  - Accidents, Injuries & Incidents.
  - Risk Assessment & Risk Management.

## 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

- Complaints.
- Risk Assessment & Risk Management.
- Accidents, Injuries and Incidents.
- Missing Child.

### 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 18 adults working directly with 90 children on the day 1 of inspection in the morning and afternoon.
- There were 19 adults working directly with 90 children on the day 2 of inspection in the morning and 91 children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a) Documentary evidence on the roster indicated that at least 2 adults were on the premises when the pre-school was operating.

### 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:*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (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) (h) Documented evidence on a multimedia application indicated that children were signed in and out on both days of inspection.

- (i) The inspectors were furnished with a staff roster which included staff working directly with children, relief, cover staff and breaks.
- (k) An accident, incident and injury form was documented and recorded for the 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2025.

### 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.*

#### General Safety:

- There was a buzzer and camera access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The staff only areas, kitchen, staff sanitary area and storage areas were secured and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- The playroom temperatures were thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas, for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- The external outdoor play area was secured so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area. The service has put in measures to reduce the risk of a child leaving the service in the outdoor area.
  - The exit points to the play areas have been reduced from 2 to 1.
  - The 3 exit points from the outdoor play area were secured with devices.
  - Headcounts are carried out prior to children going out to the outdoor area and before returning to the playrooms.
  - Daily risk assessments are carried out of the outdoor play area by management.
  - Adults were aware of their role and responsibilities in caring, keeping children safe and supervising children in the outdoor area.

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

In conversation staff in each playrooms stated they had received training in the policies of the service. They were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supervising children during the operation of the service.

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 inspectors on the day.

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

It was observed on both days of inspection 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 VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 31 - Notification of incidents

*A registered provider shall notify the Agency in writing within 3 working days of becoming aware of any of the following incidents occurring in the preschool service:*

*(e) an incident in respect of which a pre-school child attending the service goes missing while attending the service.*

#### Compliance Information

31(e) The service had documented evidence that the registered provider had notified the Early Years Inspectorate within 3 days of becoming aware of a recent notifiable incident.

### Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

#### Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
  - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
  - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
  - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the complaint has been dealt with.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a), (b), (c)

The service when asked stated they had one recent complaint.

The service has a complaints policy outlining the process and procedure for:

- How to make a complaint, who the named person in the service is that deals with complaints and that they are treated in a confidential manner.
- The implementation of the complaint's procedure and how the service deals with complaints.
- The manner through which a complaint is dealt with and the procedures in which a complainant is kept up to date in relation to the complaint.
- The policy outlines the different steps in the complaint's process and the right of appeal.

(3)(a)(b) The policy outlined how the complaint is dealt with and that it is open for inspection by an authorised officer.

(4) The service policy detailed that a record is maintained for 2 years from the date on which the complaint was made.