

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY081
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Name of Service:	Maureen's Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Milltown, Ballymacaquinn Abbeydorney., Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 YK5X
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maureen Spillane
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	05/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	None
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Áras an Phobail, Deans Lane, Tralee, Co. Kerry.
Inspection undertaken by:	N. Reidy
Title:	Early Years Inspector

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

Maureen's Pre-school is registered as a privately operated early years service, catering for children aged between 2 years and 6 years on a sessional basis. The children attending on inspection were aged between 2 years 11 months and 5 years. The service is registered to operate one session between the hours of 9.15 am and 12.15 pm Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a community hall in the rural area of Abbeydorney, Tralee, Co. Kerry. The service consists of 1 playroom with sanitary accommodation in the room. The children have access to a small outdoor play area situated at the side of the building, directly accessible from the playroom. In addition, the children have access to the spacious indoor hall on specified days and to a purpose-built community playground located behind the building.

Staffing

There are 2 adults attached to the service employed to work directly with the children each day. This includes the registered provider.

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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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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 wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, 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*

(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.*

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(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 registered provider is the designated person in charge and there is a named deputy to deputise in her absence as required.

(b) When the unannounced inspection commenced, the registered provider and the named deputy were on duty to assist with the inspection process.

(2) (a) & (b) Following a review of the previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Garda vetting for 1 staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal was requested for review.

(c) The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in relation to the 1 staff member.

(d) As it was determined that no new staff members had been employed since the last inspection, this was not the subject of inspection.

(4) The 2 staff working directly with the children had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ)

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference

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number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) Throughout the period of inspection, the registered provider did ensure that there was an adequate number of adults caring for the children attending the service.

(3) There were 2 adults caring for 18 children attending the service on a sessional basis. The adult child ratio was correct and maintained.

(8)(c) Not applicable as the service does not operate single-handedly.

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

(1)(a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- The children's toilets were located within the playroom allowing children independent access to them as they needed with the staff on hand to supervise and provide assistance if needed.
- All the food consumed on the premise is supplied by the parents of the children attending the service.
- Following tidy up before the morning snack, all the children washed their hands under adult supervision.
- Children helped themselves to their lunch bags and sat at their tables of choice as the registered provider read the story "10 Scary Monsters".
- The food observed on inspection included a selection of sandwiches, yogurts, cheese and fruit.

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- In conversation with the staff, the inspector was informed of the foods prohibited in line with the Healthy eating Policy of the service.
- The staff were caring and attentive to the children they were caring for. They praised the children for their efforts for example when practicing manners and for colouring activities.
- The children had access to the toys and play materials that were positioned on the low-level open shelving and on the floor in the room to assist children to independently access them as needed.
- The staff informed the inspector, one of the children's emerging interests currently included for example dinosaurs, as evidenced with the children colouring dinosaurs and playing with the selection of dinosaurs provided.
- The 'cosy area' provided in the corner of the playroom consisted of soft seating, cushions, blankets and a rug on the floor.
- Located on the wall in the rest area, there were photographs of children partaking in various activities in the service under the heading entitled "our amazing work."
- On the inspector's arrival to the service, some children were playing in the outdoor play area. The connecting door from the playroom to the outdoor area remained open, allowing children the choice of moving between the indoor and outdoor area staff supervision and management of the number of children.
- The children availed of time in the outdoor community playground located to the rear of the building. There was a selection of play equipment that included play units, swings, slides and spring rockers.

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 cleaning agents seen on inspection were stored on a high-level shelf in the playroom out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was secured with fencing and a gate.
- The 2 internal doors leading from the playroom were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing the indoor hall.

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- One of the fire doors in the playroom with the low-level handle used to open the door was fitted with an alarm that was in working order when checked. The door opened out to the building's unsecured entrance doors, a kitchen, adult sanitary accommodation and the indoor hall.
- The children were observed going to and from the community playground located behind the building. A headcount was conducted before leaving the room. The children were supervised by the 2 staff members, one adult was at the front of the group and one adult behind the group, ensuring each child held hands. There were no cars observed in transit during the arrival and departure to the playground. One adult remained in close proximity to the entrance/exit gate during the time spent there.
- In conversation with the registered provider, she stated that she is in the process of having signs produced to display that children that children are moving through the carpark. Going forward the children will be provided with high- visibility jackets when using the community playground.

Infection Control:

- The children's perishable food items were refrigerated in the fridge in the playroom to prevent food spoilage.
- The inspector observed handwashing by the children took place before the snack time and after using the toilet.
- The tables were sanitized down before the morning snack was eaten.
- There was a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towels to promote effective handwashing by the children to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit doors were observed to be unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A section of the artificial grass in the outdoor play area was not secured to the ground posing risk of injury to the children.
2. The 2 fire exit doors in the hall that were fitted with level handles for opening were not alarmed. The doors opened out onto the carpark and to the roadway posing a risk of injury to children. In conversation with the registered provider, she informed that both fire doors had been replaced with new doors that were not fitted with alarms as were attached to the previous doors. The inspector observed the hall was not used for the children during the inspection.

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Fire Safety:

- The records on file demonstrated that fire drills were not documented as conducted on a monthly basis.
The last record showed the last fire drill was carried out on 8/12/2025.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The grass is now in place on the ground; it has been glued down to prevent tripping.
- The alarms are in place on the fire exit doors. The alarms will be checked each time they go into the hall.

Fire Safety:

- A reminder to document the fire drills when complete.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- A photograph of the grass secured to the ground.
- A photograph of the alarms in place.

Fire Safety:

- A record of the fire drill conducted on 10.6.'26.

Summary Comment

All documentation received was examined. The requirement has been met.

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 2 staff members working in the servicer had current First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed, as evidenced by the 2 certifications furnished to the inspector.

(2)

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- (a) The sufficiently equipped first aid box was wall mounted in the playroom, out of the reach of children.
- (b) At all times when the service is in operation, the first aid box was accessible to the adults in the event that children required them.

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) The service had maintained in writing a record of the following: -
- (a) A template to record each fire drill that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 8/12/'25.
 - (b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance checks of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm. The records on file demonstrated the last check for the smoke alarm was 20.04.'26 and for the firefighting equipment was July 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certification for the service was furnished to the inspector.

The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- the contact details for the insurance provider
- the name and address of the service insured
- the category (sessional) of insurance cover for the service.

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- the number of children covered by the insurance was for 22 children.
- The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27/03/'27.