

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH065
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Naíonra Dhún Dealgan
-------------------------	----------------------

Address of Service:	Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan, Muirtheimhne Mór, Dún Dealgan, Co. Louth
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	A91 D797
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Annette Mhic Ardáil
-------------------------------------	---------------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date(s) of Inspection:	06/02/2026
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	No.
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Flood
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).	

Conditions if applicable	Not Applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Naionra Dhún Dealgan was established in 1994 and operates as a sessional pre-school service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 44 children and operates from 08:45 to 12:45 each weekday.

The service operates from a purpose-built building on the grounds of the primary school Gaelscoil Dhun Dealgan.

There are 2 playrooms in operation namely Seomra 1 and Seomra 2 that are situated on the ground floor.

Ancillary accommodation consists of sanitary areas, staff room, a kitchen and storage areas. The preschool children have access to outdoor play areas; a Clós Beag which is located directly of the two playrooms and Clós Mór which is located on the grounds of the primary school.

Staffing

The service manager and 6 childcare staff are employed to work directly with the preschool children. Two additional adults are present in the service as part of a community employment scheme.

The registered provider is a member of the board of management but 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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 would like to acknowledge the cooperation of the 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge and deputy person was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 10.35am.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Nine staff files were reviewed including files for the service manager, six childcare staff and 2 staff who were in the service on a work placement.

The following vetting documents were available:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written references available for 9 staff members. All references were validated as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(c) A processed Garda Vetting disclosure was available for all 9 members of staff. The registered provider adhered to 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 was available of the required international police vetting for 2 staff members.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that all members of staff, including the service manager who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) On the day of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there were 2 rooms in operation which included:

- **Seomra 1:** There were 2 staff working directly with the 9 pre-school children present, aged between 3 to 4 years. One additional staff member was also present on work placement from a community employment scheme.
- **Seomra 2:** There were two staff was working directly with the 19 pre-school children present, aged between 4 to 5 years. One additional staff member was also present on work placement from a community employment scheme.

The service manager was also present and provided assistance in the care rooms as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) Documentary evidence was on display in the service containing the names, qualifications and experience of all staff present. In addition, curriculum vitae were available in the staff files presented for inspection.
- (h) A written record was available of the arrival and departure times for the children attending the service on a daily basis.
- (i) Documentary evidence was available of a weekly staff roster which was reflective of the staff present in the service.
- (j) No medication was administered during the inspection. Documentary evidence was available of signed parental consent for the administration of emergency medication including temperature reducing medication in accordance with the services policy.
- (k) A sample of 5 accident and incident records for the previous 5 months were reviewed. The forms were complete and contained the required information e.g. parent signatures indicating that they had been informed, staff signatures and managers signature indicating that they had reviewed the information.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

Basic Needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before snack times and after toileting.
- Snack time was observed to be a social, interactive occasion with all children observed seated at the tables. The staff confirmed that the service is currently enrolled in the preschool nutrition programme 'Bia Blasta' and they provide a variety of food and snacks to the preschool children. The children's lunch on the day of the inspection was observed to consist of cheese cubes, a variety of freshly made sandwiches, fresh fruit, bread sticks and cheese dip and pancakes. The food was presented on a platter, and the children were encouraged to serve themselves. Drinks were also available as required by the children.
- The toilet trained children were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.
- A suitable comfortable rest area was available in each of the care rooms, with soft seating, mats and cushions provided, should a child need to rest or take a break from activities during the session.

Supporting relationship around children

- The staff members in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and supportive manner. Soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children and staff member for example, "its ok.... we don't need to race...its ok....".
- The staff were obviously familiar with the children and their families. One staff member was observed to talk to some of the children about helping their daddy and the jobs that they do to help. They were also familiar with the additional family members and siblings.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Communication between the parents and staff was informal at drop off and pick-up. The staff confirmed that phone-calls and a small messaging service are also used to keep parents informed about the children's care needs and activities happening in the service including photographs, artwork and curriculum themes. The children's artwork and observations are collated in a folder that are sent home as a 'keepsake' at the end of the school year.
- The staff when questioned confirmed that regular staff meetings are held both for each of the care rooms individually and all staff in the service collectively. A small messaging service is also reported in use by the staff for the sharing of information.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- All blind cords in the service were restricted or made inaccessible to the children. Documentary evidence of daily risk assessments was evident in the service.
- Cleaning equipment was stored out of reach of the children.
- Low level sharp corners were inaccessible or protected to prevent possible injury to a child.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing in the service.
- Effective hand-washing practices were observed during the inspection, after toileting, and prior to snack time.
- Good environmental cleaning practices were observed during the inspection, with tables being wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities. Staff when questioned were able to verbalise correct cleaning processes for toys and equipment.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service on a monthly basis.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms dated 03/25 and 02/10/25 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed on the premises.