

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015LH110
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Spraoi Wheaton Hall
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 7 Wheaton Hall Shop Units, Drogheda, Co. Louth
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A92 FC78
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Joanne Cooney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	12/02/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	39	PM	23
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully & AM. Coyle
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable
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### Description of service

Spraoui Wheaton Hall is a full day care service and is one of four early years services operated by the registered provider, all located in Co. Louth. Preschool children and school-aged children from 1 years up to 12 years of age are currently accommodated in the service from 7.30am to 6.30pm each weekday. Eligible children are facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00am to 12.00pm in the Naíonra room and from 9.15am to 12.15pm in the ECCE room. In addition to these two rooms, the Toddler room is used to accommodate the youngest children attending the service. Ancillary accommodation on the premises includes a sleep room, a partitioned space adjoining the Toddler room currently used as an office/workspace, a kitchen, a staff room and sanitary accommodation. An enclosed outdoor play area is located to the side of the premises. On the day of inspection, a pre-ECCE room was in operation. This room was located in a refurbished shop unit adjacent to the main premises.

### Staffing

There were 12 adults present in the service on the day of inspection and, of these, 9 were working directly with the preschool children including the service manager who was coordinating the operational management of the service whilst providing support in the care rooms when needed. The area manager was present on the day of inspection to support staffing needs due to absences. A staff member present from 1pm worked directly with the school age children. The chef was also present and was engaged in cooking and kitchen duties. The registered provider was not present in the service during the inspection.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28; however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 8. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 person in charge, the area manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

## Part II - Registration and Register

### Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.*

### Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider was operating outside of the services current registration status without authority to do so. An additional care room located in a retail unit adjacent to the premises was in operation on the day of inspection without prior notification and approval from Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that due to extenuating circumstances the process of submitting an application of a change in circumstances was disrupted. Since the inspection the planning permission application has been resubmitted.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Planning application number.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider was contacted by Tusla's Registration office in writing on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2024 in relation to engaging in the process of submitting a change in circumstance application within a specific timeframe. This process is ongoing.

### 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) The service manager was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The service manager was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

The files for 12 staff members including the service manager and area manager were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for the 12 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 12 staff members whose files were reviewed. The service also 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 3 staff members who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 10 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service, including the service manager and area manager, held an appropriate childcare qualification at level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the minister to be 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.*

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

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.05am and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Toddler room there were 10 children aged 1 year 1 month to 3 years 1 month attending on a full day and part time basis, being cared for by 3 staff members.
- In the ECCE sessional room there were 12 children aged between 3 years 10 months and 5 years being cared for by 3 staff members. One of the 3 staff members was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio, and to work directly with a child with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In the Naíonra room there were 10 children aged between 3 years 4 months and 4 years 9 months being cared for by 1 staff member.
- In the pre-ECCE room there were 7 children aged between 3 years 1 month to 4 years being cared for by 1 staff member.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service.

## 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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

#### Basic needs:

- Mealtimes in the service were observed to be a social occasion for the children. In the Toddler room the practitioners engaged the children in conversation while providing assistance to them to open snacks or to feed themselves if needed.
- The children's personal care needs were promptly attended to. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as required. The practitioners used the opportunity to engage and chat with children.

The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision. In the Toddler room, children's noses and faces were cleaned when needed. When going to the garden, staff ensured the children were appropriately dressed.

- Younger children in the service were facilitated to sleep as needed with most children who required a nap doing so after lunch. Sleeping children rested in the assigned sleep room adjacent to the Toddler room.
- On the day of inspection, all children had time to play outdoors.
- Staff demonstrated familiarity with the children's interests and preferences. Staff were observed to provide activities that they knew the children would enjoy. When children became upset, they were provided with comfort and reassurance. The practitioners in the Toddler room had established an effective routine for the children which supported them to participate in the daily activities of the service. The practitioners gave children notice of upcoming transitions and made transitions play-based, for example, playing a 'clean up' song and asking the children to help clean up their materials before garden time.

#### **Supporting relationships around children:**

- The staff in the service were observed to have warm and caring interactions with children to help them feel safe and secure in the service. Practitioners working in the care rooms spoke positively about the children and demonstrated familiarity with their needs and personalities. In the Toddler room, the practitioners were observed supporting children when minor disputes arose by talking gently with children, at their level, to help them find a solution or comfort one another.
- Childrens artwork and photographs were on display in all of the care rooms which supports the children to feel recognised and valued in the service.
- In the Toddler room and Pre-ECCE daily care sheets were completed for each child to record relevant information that parents would receive at the end of the day, such as meals, sleep times and activities or events.
- The staff in the service were observed to work well together as a team, with on-going communication about routines, transitions, and lunch breaks to ensure consistency of care to the children.

### Physical and material environment:

- The Toddler room was spacious and provided space for the children to explore and move around their environment. Age-appropriate furniture and equipment was provided for child of 13 months in attendance including as a highchair, floor cushions and playmats. The room consisted of a well-resourced home area, construction area, transport toys, musical instruments, dress up area and sand table that children were playing with on the inspector's arrival to the room.
- In both the ECCE room and Naíonra room well-resourced interest areas in addition to play and learning materials to support the children's play experiences were available. Interest areas included home areas with well-resourced play kitchens, baby care items, dress up materials and shopping resources, a range of transport toys, arts and crafts materials, table top materials and a broad range of reading resources to support the children's language development.
- Throughout the care rooms play resources and equipment were available on low level shelves for the children to take play equipment and materials as they chose which encouraged independence and facilitated the children's choice.
- An enclosed outdoor space was provided to the front of them main premises, accessible from the ground floor. The area was laid with an impact absorbing surface and was resourced with a construction area, mud kitchen, tree stumps for climbing and balancing, a covered sand tray, a vegetable patch, plastic slides and climbing frame. Bikes and scooters were also available to the children.

### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a) During morning snack time in the Naíonra room there was no water or milk available for the children to drink. Both the water and milk which were stored in the fridge in the care room were frozen and therefore could not be used. However, no water was retrieved from another source to give to the children. One child continuously requested a drink of water from the staff member, but this was not provided.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The fridge temperatures have been checked and updated. A new opening/closure policy is in place which includes checking fridge temperatures and the availability of fresh milk and drinking water in all rooms.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of opening/closure procedures

Copy of care room fridge check procedure

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19(1)(a) has been adequately addressed.

### 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 entrance doors leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The staircase was well lit and in a good state of repair.
- The kitchen was located on the first floor and was inaccessible to the children.
- Windows on the first floor were fitted with safety devices.

#### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at all the sinks throughout the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and after nappy changing.
- The services nappy changing policy was observed to be implemented when practitioners changed children's nappies.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

#### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of reach of children.

#### Safe Sleep:

- Based on an examination of the children’s attendance records maintained in the service, children under 2 years of age had access to a standard cot on a daily basis. On the day of inspection 1 child aged less than 2 years in attendance slept in a standard cot provided in the sleep rooms. Children over 24 months had access to blue floor beds if they required sleep.
- The inspectors observed that 10-minute sleep check observations noting each child’s colour, position and breathing pattern were being performed and documented on all sleeping children.

### Fire Safety:

- The service’s designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. On inspection of the Pre-ECCE room at 10.55am, an exit door leading to the rear of the shop units was found to be unlocked. This unlocked exit door was located within the children’s permitted path to the sanitary facilities, but out of sight of the care room. This increased the risk of children exiting the premises unsupervised.

#### Infection Control:

2. There was an increased risk of cross contamination during scheduled nappy changing time as several children were brought to the changing room with 1 staff member available to change and supervise. While the staff member changed a nappy, the inspector observed the waiting children to touch numerous surfaces such as the toilets, doors, bins and taps. This increases the risk of cross contamination of surfaces and children’s hands.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Staff have been notified of a policy and procedure regarding this door. This door is to be checked and locked at all times during the preschool session. A staff member will supervise children leaving the main care room to use the toilet. This new policy has been displayed in the room.

#### Infection Control:

2. Nappy changing procedure has been amended and staff have been informed to bring 1 child to the changing room at a time.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

A copy of the new policy and procure

### Infection Control:

A copy of the new policy and procedure regarding nappy changing.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) Records demonstrated that the date and time of attendance and departure in respect of each pre-school child is recorded on a daily basis.

(3) (a) All persons other than those listed above in (3)(a)(i) – (iv) are approved access to the service by an employee prior to entry.

(b) Visitor details are entered into the visitors' book, and the inspectors were requested to sign in and out of the service by an authorised employee.

## 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) A person trained in first aid including first aid response (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date certifications held by a number of staff members.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises on the ground floor, first floor and Pre-Ecce room.

### 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 fire drills which had been completed in the service. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 18/01/2024.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in May 2023 and the smoke detection system on 17/07/2023.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.

### Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate the service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate a maximum of 70 children attending on a full day care basis, with an expiry date 27/03/2024.