

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK130
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Name of Service:	An Naíonra Gaelscoil Ó Doghair
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Address of Service:	Bóthar An Staisiúin, Caisleán Nua Thiar, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V42PD71
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Name of Registered Provider:	Donal Cooper
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	26/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Office, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Located within Gaelscoil Ó Dóghair on Station Road, Newcastle West, Naionra Gaelscoil Ó Dóghair is a community-based childcare service. The facility offers a sessional childcare service each Monday to Friday, 9.00 am to 12.15 pm. An extended option of part-time care is available until 1.45 pm each day. A school age childcare service is offered each afternoon. The service can accommodate up to 44 preschool children at any one time.

The service features three well-resourced preschool rooms, each designed with distinct interest areas to encourage purposeful play. For convenience and hygiene, sanitary facilities are located directly adjacent to each classroom. Children also enjoy daily physical activity in a large, well equipped outdoor playground.

Staffing

The registered provider is the chairperson of the school board of management committee. A designated person is appointed to manage the preschool facility. All staff working at the service hold the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education. There are staff employed who have completed the LINC programme, a course designed to enhance inclusion of children with additional needs in early childhood care and education settings.

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, premises and facilities. 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 wishes 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*

(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*

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(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 designated person in charge of operating the service was on leave on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise in their absence.

(b) During the period of the inspection, a designated person in charge was present and the staff roster indicated a person in charge was always available on the premises.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for all staff at the facility.

(b) All references were from past employers or from alternative sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for each staff member. 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 not required for any staff members at the service.

(4) All adults working directly with children held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that at all times there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the preschool children.
- (2) On the day of the inspection there were 17 pre-school children and 2 adults on the premises for the morning sessional service. There were 8 preschool children and 2 adults available for the afternoon part time service. The adult child ratio was correct.

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

Basic Needs

The service actively promoted healthy eating habits, with parents providing each child with a nutritious daily snack. Children had unrestricted access to their drinks throughout the day. Sanitary accommodation was located close to each room with nappy changing stations and toilets located adjacent close by. All bathroom facilities were equipped with hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels to ensure proper hygiene standards. To support play in all conditions, each child had access to outdoor rain gear, and the service maintained a supply of spare clothes for all children if needed. Indoors to promote a sense of comfort each room featured dedicated rest areas with soft seating, soft floor mats, and blankets accessible. The service prioritised a regular change of environment, ensuring every child enjoyed extended periods of outdoor play daily.

At all times throughout the inspection staff engaged meaningfully with the children, using a gentle tone to provide praise and guidance. During snack time, they sat with the children to create a sociable atmosphere.

Physical and Material Environment

The preschool rooms were each thoughtfully designed with age-appropriate, low-level furniture for dining and activities. Every room featured well-developed interest areas, including home corners, imaginative play spaces, and construction zones. Creative expression was encouraged through easily accessible arts and crafts materials, with children's work displayed on walls throughout the facility. Sensorial play was supported in all rooms via tuff trays filled with diverse materials like sand, water, and grains.

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The outdoor spaces included a large playground, equipped with a large connect 4 frame, climbing frames, playhouses, and swings designed to challenge all ability levels. For safety, soft rubber matting was installed under all climbing structures. Additionally, a large open space provided ample space for running, cycling, and ball games.

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 registered provider insured that a person trained as a first aid responder was at all times immediately available to the children attending the preschool service. All 3 staff employed at the preschool had completed FAR training.

(2)(a) The registered provider ensured that suitably equipped first aid boxes were safely stored at the facility in an easily accessible, conspicuous position.

(b) Staff at the service ensured that a first aid box was at all times located close to where the children played.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a record in writing of monthly fire drills that took place at the service. The most recent drill took place on the 20th of March 2026.

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(b) There was a record in place of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms systems. The most recent maintenance check took place in September 2025.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 42 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 4th of September 2025 and expired on the 3rd of September 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) All areas inside and outside were well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, nappy changing areas and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults present each day. A disability access toilet was available if required.

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Non-Compliance Information

(b) Visitor access to the premises was not managed appropriately. On the day of the inspection the entrance gate to the area accommodating the Naionra facility and the front door of the preschool building were left open. The magnetic lock on the gate failed to engage. This allowed unrestricted access for unauthorised adults, creating a safety risk for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(b) Following the inspection of the service, the magnetic lock on the entrance gate was adjusted to ensure it closed immediately after each use. Staff performed daily checks of the gate and the front door as people entered and exited the building.

Supporting documentation submitted

(b) The corrective action plan outlined how all access and exit points in the building were added to a routine checklist to ensure adequate security was maintained at all times on the premises.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and the evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified has been adequately addressed.