

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH135
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Mornington Pre-school
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Realt Na Mara BNS, Donacarney, Mornington, Co. Meath
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<b>Eircode:</b>	A92 WC52
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Helena Finegan
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	30/09/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	27	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath C15 CP23
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Cunningham
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Mornington Preschool is a private Early Years' Service, located in Donacarney. The service operates from 9.30am to 12.30pm each weekday and provides sessional service to pre-school children aged from 2 years to 6 years. The service now operates from a boys' national school and consists of two care rooms on the ground floor of the school. Sanitary accommodation is available within the care rooms. An outdoor play area is accessed to the rear of the school.

### Staffing

Five staff members are employed in the preschool, which includes the registered provider and one staff member providing AIM support. Additionally, a relief member of staff is available when required.

### 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.

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 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.

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

#### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

Five staff members and one relief staff files were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Twelve validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all six staff. The service also demonstrated with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### 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 were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(3) The adult/child ratio was correct;

In the **Big Room**: Three adults cared for 15 children attending a sessional service (aged 3 years to 4 years).

In the **Orange Room**: Two adults cared for 12 children attending a sessional service (aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years).

### 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

##### Basic needs of the children:

- A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents.
- The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings.
- An appropriate daily routine was in place which allocate times for child – initiated play and learning and adult planned and facilitated activities.
- Transitions were clearly announced and signaled by staff. Children were given time to complete activities at their own pace before starting the next activity. This approach respected the children's learning engagements and resulted in a smooth flow in the routine.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff members were observed being respectful, gentle and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings.
- Staff members were observed sitting with the children at mealtimes and engaging them in conversation which ensured that the experience was relaxed and sociable.
- Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary and email and telephone contact are used as an alternative method of contact. A closed electronic messaging service was used to communicate group messages to parents. A family wall with pictures of children's parents and siblings was displayed in the rooms.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

*A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

Both rooms were well resourced with a wide variety of age-appropriate play and learning equipment and materials that provided a stimulating and curious learning environment for the children, both indoors and in the outdoor area. All equipment and materials were accessible to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. The tables and chairs provided were child sized which enabled all children to sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. All equipment and furniture were observed in a clean and well-maintained condition. The outdoor area was well resourced with excess equipment taken out each day from storage and included space for the children to run freely and engage in playground games.

### 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 door to the service was controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school rooms. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. The staff members ensured that grapes provided for snacks were cut in half to mitigate the risk of a child potentially choking.

##### Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper hand towel, hygienically dispensed from wall mounted units, were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established and observed.

Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues and paper towel. Written cleaning schedules were maintained for all room environments which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

### Administration of Medication

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and during conversations with staff members, they advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

### Safe Sleep:

A comfortable rest area was available in the preschool rooms for any preschool child who wished to rest or take a break from activities.

### Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records were maintained. All fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed. The staff were aware of the evacuation procedures in the event of a fire or other emergency.

## 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) The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms inspected.

(3) (a), (b) The registered provider together with the school authorities ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.