

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO032
Name of Service:	Naíonra Céimeanna Beaga
Address of Service:	Gaelscoil na Cruaiche, Westport, Co. Mayo
Eircode:	F28 R243
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine Allen
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	09/09/2024
No of pre-school children:	AM 27 PM -
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Farrell
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
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Description of service

Naíonra Céimeanna Beaga is a sessional service located in a Gaelscoil (Irish language-medium) primary school in Westport town in Co. Mayo. The service is registered to provide morning sessions from 08:45-12:00 and 09:00 - 12:00 for children aged from two to six years of age. The service is also registered to provide school aged childcare services. There are two playrooms in the service. Outdoor play areas shared with the Gaelscoil are located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are seven staff employed in the service including a manager and childcare staff. The registered provider works directly with the children in the service. One staff member is employed through the Access and Inclusion Model.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under sections of regulations 9, 11, 15, 23 and 27. 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 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

(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

- (2)
- It was confirmed through discussion with the registered provider and review of documentation that there were four new adults in the service since the last focused inspection on the 5 October 2021. The vetting documentation for the remaining three staff members had been reviewed and accepted as meeting regulatory requirements on previous inspections. The following vetting documentation and qualifications were available on file for the four new staff members:
- (a) Two written validated references from past employers particularly the most recent employer for three staff members and one written validated reference from a past employer for one staff member.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven staff. However, the service did not always adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Vetting documents showed that international police vetting was not required for the four new staff members.
- (4)
- All seven staff members held the required qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) There was no written reference from one of the staff member's most recent employer available on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response that:

- (2) (a)

Corrective and Preventive Action

A reference was provided and validated.

In future the service will ensure that all the relevant information is received prior to a staff member's start date.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the reference was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider has adequately addressed the non-compliance found on inspection under this regulation.

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 inspector's unannounced arrival to the service there were 5 adults working directly with 27 children in the service. Adequate numbers of adults were observed to work directly with the children throughout the inspection.
- (3) There were two playrooms (seomra) in use in the service named the Seomra Sicíní and the Seomra Féileacáin. The minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children was adhered to with 5 adults working directly with 27 children during the inspection. 1 adult worked with 7 children in the Seomra Féileacáin and 3 adults worked with 20 children in the Seomra Sicíní. The designated person in charge worked with the children in both playrooms during the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) to (i)

10 children's records were randomly selected from across both playrooms for review by the inspector. The children's records contained the information detailed under the regulation.

(3) (c)

The required records were made readily available to the inspector by the registered provider on request.

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 to the service were secured on the inspector's arrival to the service. The inspector was admitted to the service by the registered provider following the production of identification documentation. During the inspection the children from both the Seomra Sicíní and Seomra Féileacáin played outside together in an enclosed outdoor space at the rear of the building. The two entrance gates leading to this outdoor space were secured with safety mechanisms during this time preventing children from leaving the area unnoticed. Blind cords on the windows in the Seomra Sicíní and Seomra Féileacáin were found to be secured with safety devices. Cleaning products were stored in cupboards with safety devices on the doors in both playrooms and were inaccessible to the children on the day.

The staff supervised the children closely when using the mezzanine in the Seomra Sicíní and there was soft wipeable matting at the base of the mezzanine stairs. There was clear heavy-duty plastic attached to the sides of the mezzanine to prevent potential footholds on the wooden sides of the mezzanine. The toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stages of the children using them during the inspection.

Infection Control:

The staff prompted and supervised the children to wash and dry their hands at key moments such as after using the toilet and before eating. The service had child friendly signs on display to support children in washing their hands thoroughly. Warm water and liquid soap were provided at the sinks for handwashing and paper towels were provided for the children and staff to dry their hands with. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for disposal of waste in the service. There were refrigerators provided in both playrooms and used to store the children's snacks/lunches containing perishable food items.

Administration of Medication:

The staff advised the inspector that there was no child in attendance in the preschool at that time that required medication to be administered to them in the service. There was a policy in place in the service regarding the administering of medication to children.

Fire Safety:

The emergency exit routes were observed to be free from obstruction during the inspection.

Outing:

The inspector was informed by staff that an outing had been undertaken by the service to a local venue prior to the end of the previous preschool year and that a risk assessment of the venue had been conducted before the outing. The staff advised the inspector that the outing had been undertaken in accordance with the service policies and that an attendance record book and first aid supplies had been brought by staff on the outing.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for seven staff members. However, two of these vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years and were not in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider advised in a written response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting renewal applications for both staff members were submitted and returned.
Staff will check that renewed garda vetting documents are in staff files each year.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copies of two garda vetting renewal documents were submitted by the service to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The adults supervised the children mainly by sight however some children were out of sight but remained within earshot of the adults when using the toilet by themselves. At mealtimes staff stayed beside the children supervising them closely and providing help if needed. The staff were observed to supervise the children closely by sight when using the mezzanine in the Seomra Sicíní.

Later in the session the children spent time playing outdoors and the staff positioned themselves so that the children were in view of staff in all areas of the outdoor space.