

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015MO042

Name of Service: Footsteps Pre-school

Address of Service: Scoil Naomh Phadraig, Knockroon, Headford, Co. Galway

Eircode: H91 Y3Y4

Name of Registered Provider: Edel Hyland

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 09/04/2025

No of pre-school children: AM 13 PM No.

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Child and Family Agency, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.

Inspection undertaken by: F Kelly.

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

Description of service

This sessional service is located in Knockroon National school. It operates from 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday. It caters for 22 children aged from 2 years to 6 years of age.

Staffing

There was a total of four staff working in the service on the day of inspection which did not include the registered provider

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. On inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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.

Additional Information

On the 11/04/2025. A referral was made to the SOORS (Services Operating Outside their Registration Status) department of the Early years inspectorate as the service was operating from recently constructed playroom. The Early years Inspectorate that was not notified of the proposed change prior to the change taking place.

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 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

On the 20/01/2025, the service moved into a new playroom on the same premises. An application of the change of circumstances was made to the Early years Inspectorate prior to this change but was closed due to an incomplete application. The service continued with the change of playrooms without the prior approval from the Early Years Inspectorate and they did not complete the change in circumstances application.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider stated the following in their reply:

Corrective and Preventive Action

A change in circumstances application was submitted to the early years inspectorate on the 8th May 2025. The service will not operate outside of the approved registration and will wait for approval from Tusla before carrying out any changes in the future.

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Summary Comment

The findings documented under regulation 8 remains non-compliant as the registered provider did not submit adequate assurances and evidence that the non-compliances had been rectified.

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.*

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b)** During the period of inspections, the deputy person was in charge and facilitated the inspection.

Following a review of the service files and discussion with the deputy person in charge, it was confirmed that there were four staff employed in the service which included a registered provider that did not work in the service on a day of inspection.

These files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

- (2)(a) Of the required 10 written and appropriately validated references, 6 were from the adult's most recent employer.
- (b) Of the required 10 written and appropriately validated references, 4 were from a reputable source other than their previous employer.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the staff working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting for staff members every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult working in the service had had lived for a period longer than six consecutive months outside the jurisdiction.
- (4) All adults working directly with children have obtained an award in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from Level 6 to level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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.

respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

(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) During the period of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working with the pre-school children attending the service.

(3)

On the day of inspection, there was 1 playroom in operation.

At 10.15 am, there were 3 adults working with 13 preschool children

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

Supporting relationships :

- The atmosphere between the children and the adults was calm and unhurried throughout the inspection.
- Adults sat at the tables with the children when helping with jigsaws and various other play activities. The level of interaction and engagement of the children were positive, the children were heard laughing, talking, asking questions and generally having a good experience throughout the period of inspection.
- A key worker system was in place; each staff member was assigned six children. A chart was on display with the children's photographs indicating what key worker they were link with.
- The children got an opportunity to have an input on what they would like to have access to in the new playroom. All the children drew pictures of what they would like to have in their new playroom, these pictures were on display on a notice board in the playroom.
- There was a "Job board" on display, outlying various jobs that the children were responsible for throughout the session. When the children were picked to do as task, their photo was displayed next to the photo of the job, e.g. handing out the lunches.

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 outdoor play areas in the service were securely fenced and there were no hazards identified in these areas.
- On arrival to the premises the entrance door of the premises was locked and remained locked throughout the inspection thus preventing children from exiting and unauthorised persons from entering the premises.
- Storage facilities were inaccessible to children; all cleaning agents were stored in a locked cupboard.
- Staff personal belongings were also stored in a locked cupboard, out of the reach of children.
- On the day of inspection, medication was not stored on site. A locked area was available if medication was required to be stored.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing by the children was observed prior to eating and after toileting and after outdoor play.
- The premises was kept in a clean condition. Up-to-date cleaning records were available and were maintained, they detailed all areas and equipment that was cleaned.
- There were 2 toilets and 2 wash hand basins available to 22 toilet trained early years children attending the service. There was also a nappy changing unit available for up to 11 early years children in nappies. There was also 1 wash hand basin available for separate hand washing.
- The wash hand basins were equipped with both running cold and hot water. The hot water temperature on the day of inspection was recorded at 30.2 C°.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

(6) Subject to paragraph (7), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are no more than 22 children in a room in the service at any time.

Compliance Information

- (1) Adequate floor space was provided in the playroom for the free movement of children to play and explore. The overall floor measurement of this space was 99m².
- (3) The registered provider of this sessional service had allowed for a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space for each child attending the service.
- (6) The registered provider has confirmed that no more than 22 preschool children would attend this sessional service.