

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO086			
Name of Service:	Naionra Beal Atha na Muice			
Address of Service:	Scoil Muire agus Treasa, Swinford National School, Swinford, Co. Mayo			
Eircode:	F12 V050			
Name of Registered Provider:	Agnes O Donnell , Michelle Pidgeon			
Service type:	Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	22/09/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	40	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			

Description of service

Naionra Beal Atha na Muice is a sessional service registered to cater for children aged between two and six years of age. The service provides morning sessions from 8:45-11:45 hours and an afternoon session from 12:15-15:15 hours. The premise is located in a section of a primary school. There are two playrooms, a kitchen and sanitary accommodation provided. The service has access to a large outdoor play area that is shared with the primary school to the rear of the building. The service is registered to provide school aged services.

Staffing

There are five staff working in the service including the two registered providers who work directly with the children and a staff member employed through the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 16, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27 and 28. 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 providers, 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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a) and (b)

The two registered providers were designated as persons in charge in the service with at least one of them always present during service operation.

The registered providers advised the inspectors that there were two new staff members in the service since the most recent inspection of 01 June 2021. The vetting files for the other three staff members working in the service had been reviewed during previous inspections.

(2) The following documents were available on file for the two new staff members:

(a) Two written validated references from past employers for both staff.

(c) Vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána were available for the two staff.

(d) The vetting documents available showed that international police vetting was not required for the two staff members.

(4) Evidence of the required qualifications in Early childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above for the two staff new to the service since the last inspection who worked directly with children were available for review.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) When the inspector arrived unannounced to the service there was 4 staff working directly with 39 children in the service. Two staff were working with 19 children in the Seomra Dearg and additional child arrived bringing the total children present to 20. Two staff were working with 20 children in Seomra Glas and a third staff member worked with the children in the Seomra Glas from 10:16am.
- (3) The registered providers ensured that the minimum ratio for a sessional service of 1 adult to each 11 children aged from 2 years and 6 months to 6 years was adhered to with 4 to 5 adults working directly with 40 children on the day of the inspection. A review of a sample of attendance records found that there was an adequate number of adults recorded as always working directly with the children.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of ten children's records were randomly selected for review by the inspector from the children currently enrolled in the service.

(a) to (i)

Nine of the records was found to be compliant with the required details as laid out under the regulation.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The following written record was unavailable for one of the children sampled:

(g) The name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.

(i) Written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency occurring whilst in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers advised in a written response that:

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

(g) The name of the child's registered medical practitioner has now been provided by the parent. The management are now aware that all forms that are kept on file for the children need to be checked to make sure they are filled in correctly and signed by parents.

(h) The written parental consent form for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of emergency occurring whilst in the service has now been signed by the parent. The management are now aware that all forms that are kept on file for the children need to be checked to make sure they are filled in correctly and signed by parents.

Supporting documentation submitted

The service submitted documentary evidence to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The information submitted by the service has been reviewed and accepted by the Early Years Inspectorate as having addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered providers ensured that written records were kept of the following information in the service:
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of each staff member.
 - (b) Information on the service type and ages of children that the service is registered to provide services to.
 - (c) The adult: child ratios provided in the service.
 - (d) The service's type of care or programme.
 - (e) The facilities available in the service.

- (f) The service's hours of opening and fees displayed in the hallway.
- (g) The service's policies, procedures and statements as required under Regulation 10 that were kept in a service policy folder.
- (h) Details of the daily attendance of each pre-school child recorded daily in an attendance book.
- (i) Details of the staff daily working hours.
- (j) Records of any medication administered to a child while attending the service including signed parental consent contained in a record book.
- (k) Written details of accidents, injuries and incidents involving children attending the service in an accident/incident record book.

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 unannounced arrival to the service. Securing mechanisms in place on doors allowed staff to control the entry of people to the service and prevent children from leaving without authorisation. The door to the kitchen had a securing mechanism in place to prevent children accessing the area. The outside playing area was enclosed with secured gates to prevent children from leaving unauthorised. Cleaning products were stored in the adult sanitary area and were inaccessible by the children. Blind cords in place on windows in the Seomra Dearg playroom had blind cord restrictors in place to secure them. The toys and play equipment were in satisfactory condition and suitable for the age and developmental stage of the children using them.

Infection Control:

The playrooms, sanitary areas and equipment were observed to be clean on the day. Staff cleaned surfaces after use for example after lunch and following messy play with playdough. Cleaning schedules were displayed on walls and records were kept by staff of the cleaning and disinfecting procedures undertaken in the service. Windows in playrooms were opened to ventilate spaces. Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided for handwashing and drying. Child-friendly signs were in place on the sanitary area walls to prompt and remind

children how to wash their hands. Staff were observed by the inspector to prompt children and supervise them to ensure thorough cleaning of their hands. Foot pedal bins were used appropriately by the children to dispose of wastepaper towels.

Administration of Medication:

There was no medication administered to a child during the inspection. Medication that may be required to be administered in an emergency was stored out of reach of children in the service's kitchen with a care plan detailing when this may be needed to be administered. A medication administration record book was available in the service to record details including the cross checking of medication and child by two staff members.

Fire Safety:

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

Outing:

The registered providers advised the inspector that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- A large amount of equipment including cleaning and play equipment was stored in the staff sanitary area posing an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered providers advised in a written response that:

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- The Staff sanitary area is now divided into two rooms by a stud wall with doorway and locked door to the staff toilet. The staff toilet is now separated from the play equipment and storage area which will prevent the risk of infection.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of the works carried out was submitted by the registered providers to the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The Early Years Inspectorate has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted by the service and found it to have addressed the regulatory non-compliance found on inspection.

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 providers ensured that children were checked in and out of the service by an employee with written records kept.

(3)

(a) and (b)

One of the registered providers approved the inspector's entry and requested that she provide details of attendance in writing in a visitor record book on arrival to the service.

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) Certificates of the completion of First Aid Response (FAR) training courses with respective expiry dates of 10 September 2024 and the 14 May 2025 were available for two staff members.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible location on high shelving in the Seomra Glas playroom and there was an appropriately stocked first aid cabinet inaccessible to children in the Seomra Dearg.
- (b) The first aid equipment was readily accessible to the staff if a child required first aid treatment in the service.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Fire drills were conducted monthly in the service with records of the fire drills now kept in the children's attendance book kept by the staff. The most recent fire drill was recorded as having been undertaken in September 2023.
 - (b) Records were available of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The records showed that the firefighting equipment was last maintained on the 21 October 2022 and the smoke alarms/fire detection system were last maintained on the 9 December 2022.
- (2)
- (c) The records were made available in the service to the inspector on request.
- (4)
- Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the playrooms.

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 children were supervised appropriately primarily by sight throughout the inspection by staff members with the required adult: child ratios in place. Children who were toilet-trained were out of view of the staff when using the toilet but were within earshot if help was needed to be provided. The staff sat with the children when supervising them eating their food at mealtimes.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was in place for sessional service provision with an expiry date of 27 March 2024 covering the maximum number of children that can be accommodated in the service.