

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015OY048

Name of Service: Realtin Preschool

Address of Service: Scoil Charthaigh Naofa, Newtown, Rahan, Tullamore, Co. Offaly

Eircode: R35 P263

Name of Registered Provider: Aileen Murphy

Service type: Sessional

Date of Inspection: 11/09/2025

No of pre-school children: AM 19 PM 7

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Tusla, Child and Family Agency
Primary Care Centre
Church Avenue
Tullamore
Co Offaly
R35 K1W4

Inspection undertaken by: R Flynn

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

Realtin Preschool is located in a rural setting in the townland of Rahan, Tullamore, Co Offaly. Realtin preschool operates from a large room in a modular unit to the rear of Scoil Charthaigh Naofa, Primary school. The service is operated by an independent registered provider.

Sessional care and education is provided to children from 2-6 years of age. Opening hours are from 9:00am-12:00pm and 12:15pm-15:15pm, for 38 weeks of the pre-school year. The preschool has a private enclosed outdoor play area to the side of the preschool. The preschool children also have shared access to the large, enclosed school playground on site. The service consists of one large pre-school room, sanitary accommodation and office/kitchen and a store room.

Staffing

The registered provider employs three adults to work in the service. The registered provider works directly with the children and facilitated the inspection on 11 September. There were four childcare staff present on the day of inspection; this included the registered provider, the deputy person in charge and two childcare staff.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under,

- Regulation 9 (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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, 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
- (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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b)

The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Four staff files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(a)

Five written validated references were available from a previous employer and

(b)

Two written validated reference was available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four staff. In regard to the four staff members, the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)
Four employed childcare staff members working directly with the pre-school children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 5 to Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

(9) (2) (a)

One written reference from a past employer was not validated in respect of one staff employed in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Reference has been validated. All staff in the service will have two written validated references once they commence employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Validated reference received.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been adequately addressed.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the preschool children on the day of inspection.

(3) The ratio of adults to children was maintained on the day of the inspection. For the morning session, there were nineteen children attending the service being supervised directly by four adults. The afternoon session had seven children attending the service being supervised directly by three adults.

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

(1) (a)

Basic needs

Children were observed eating a packed lunch provided by their parents. Flexibility was provided with the service promoting a rolling snack time. Lunches consisted of a variety of sandwiches, yoghurts, rice cakes and fruit.

Children were observed to eat when they felt hungry. Staff sat with the children during snack times and engaged in conversation. Children's drinks were readily available in their lunch bags. The children sat together at low level tables while eating and engaging in conversations with each other.

Regular hand washing was observed as children washed their hands before meals, after toileting and as needed. Self-toileting was supported, and children were supervised as necessary.

Supporting relationships

Staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during interactions. A birthday chart and an 'our family wall' had photographs of the children and their families positioned at child's eye level. This helped the children feel connected to home. An 'our helpers' chart displayed the names and photographs of the children and helped promote responsibility and independence to the preschool children.

Each preschool child was appointed a key worker which helped with consistency of care and smooth transitions. The staff advised the inspector that information and updates regarding the service are given to parents at drop off and collection times. Photographs, children's learning journal and messages are shared via an electronic application.

Physical and material environment

The children were observed engaged, active and involved throughout the session as they chose between activities. Toys and play equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity and spontaneous play. Areas which promoted role play were available such as a dress up area with a variety of costumes, and a play office area with phones and a computer keyboard. Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed during the inspection. A range of books were available in the reading area of the preschool room. Children had the opportunity to take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities and in accessing play equipment throughout the session.

Children were observed engaged in tabletop activities such as playing with modelling dough, artwork and jigsaws. A staff member was at each table engaging with the children and talking about what the children were creating. Children's cognitive development was also supported; the staff facilitated a 'mystery box' activity where each child took turns retrieving an object from a closed box. The children described their object to the group, such as its colour and what it was used for, before placing it in on the floor in the middle of the group. This supported confidence building and collaborative learning in the group.

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

The pre-school had a variety of age and developmentally appropriate toys, materials and equipment available for the children to use and play with. Shelves had containers with dinosaurs, vehicles, magnetic tiles, stickle bricks and soft toys. Defined areas of interest included a home/kitchen corner with cooking equipment, kitchen table with a tea set, an ironing board, a cosy reading corner, a large wall mounted black board and a farm area. A variety of multi-sensory equipment were provided including sand tables and tuff trays with a variety of tools such as rakes, magnifying glasses and shape sorters, which supported the children to engage in open-ended discovery. Aprons were available for messy play activities such as painting.

Child sized tables and chairs were maintained in good condition and provided areas for the children to sit comfortably when engaging in tabletop activities and during mealtimes.

A comfortable rest area consisted of a child size couch, soft rug and a variety of throw cushions and soft toys.

The outdoor area was well maintained and resourced. A plastic corrugated roof covered a wooden deck area to the side of the outdoor space, allowing for an outdoor classroom. Wall mounted blackboards, a tuff tray with sand and a mud kitchen were available to the children. A wooden climbing frame with a slide, a play kitchen, balance bikes and wheelbarrows were available and in good condition. Wet gear and wellington boots were stored in the outdoor area to allow for play in all weather.

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 pre-school was securely locked and controlled by staff to prevent children exiting the pre-school unsupervised and to prevent unauthorised access. A door with a window panel allowed staff visibility of any visitors.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents. Cleaning products were stored in the kitchen/office area, out of reach of the children.

Staff advised the inspector they immediately cut any food such as grapes that may pose a choking risk to a child at snack time.

Infection Control:

Liquid soap and warm water were available for hand washing. Paper hand towels were accessible to children from wall mounted dispensers. The children were supported to wash their hands before snack time and after using the bathroom. Pedal bins were available in the care room and sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste. Mechanical ventilation was in place in the sanitary accommodation as well as openable windows. The care rooms were well-ventilated with openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the procedure should children required medication.

Outing:

The registered provider advised that the children do not go on outings.

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)
Three staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR). Three FAR qualified staff member were available on the premises during the operational hours of the service on 11 September 2025.
- (2)(a)
A suitably equipped first aid box was located in the service.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the pre-school 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.

(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)
A written record for the completed fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on 09 June 2025.
- (b)

A record was available demonstrating the number and type of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment were serviced on 07 March 2025 and the smoke alarms were serviced 01 July 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire were positioned at doorways throughout the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for twenty-two children attending the service and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.