

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY001
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Naíonra Dhurlas Eile Teoranta
<b>Address of Service:</b>	2 Kavanagh Place, Thurles, Co. Tipperary
<b>Eircode:</b>	E41 W181
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Corrie Ryan
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/02/2024
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM 13 PM -
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney
<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

This sessional service was established to provide care and education to children aged 2- 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 8.45 – 11.45am for 38 weeks of the year, with places funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children.

The service is bilingual with both English and Gaeilge spoken.

The service is operated from purpose-built rooms attached to a residential premises in the town of Thurles in North Tipperary and comprises of two interconnected activity rooms, an anteroom for the storage of children’s coats and bags, sanitary accommodation areas and outdoor play areas.

### Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service on a daily basis supported by three staff, including one member of staff employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM) and an experienced member of staff who works part time to support Irish language development in the service through daily story time and songs.

All staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and development at levels 5 or 8 on the national qualifications framework.

### 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(2)(4), 11(1)(3)(8), 19(1)(b), 20(1)(3), 21, 22, 24(1)(3), 25, 26(1)(4) and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 9 Management and Recruitment.

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

The staff files of two members of staff who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 26 May 2021 were reviewed as part of the inspection process. Staff files for other staff had been reviewed previously and were found to be compliant.

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of both members of staff.

(b) Not applicable as available references were from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of both staff. Relevant records were held on file. The service applied for renewal of Garda vetting for staff on a three-yearly basis.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the state.

(4) All staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 5 or 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.*

*(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.*

*(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) There were 3 staff working directly with 13 children on the day of the inspection. A fourth member of staff was present from 11am.

(3) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1 adult to 5 children for most of the morning and 1 adult to 4 children for the last part of the session, which was greater than the minimum requirement of 1 to 11.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service while it was in operation.

## 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-
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(b) Staff were observed to be kind and patient in all their interactions with the children. When there was a dispute between the children the staff calmed the children and asked them to tell their part in what was happening, then helped them find a solution. For example, at the lunch table one child wanted to sit between two other children but they didn't want to move, the staff member helped them resolve the problem while being respectful of each child's wishes.

Staff supported the children to be independent and to make choices about how they wanted to spend the morning which included where they worked, what they engaged in, when they ate their snack and when they engaged in one-to-one activities with the staff. Staff were present to guide, encourage and help the children as needed. Children received frequent positive feedback for their work with 'maith an cailín' or 'maith an buachaill' heard often throughout the morning.

Children were taught to use the sand timers to aid turn taking and sharing for popular toys or materials and were observed getting the timers themselves and using them when required.

A key worker system was in operation with each member of staff having particular responsibility for a small group of children. The staff recorded regular observations on each child which helped them to identify each child's strengths and emerging interests. This information was used to guide the staff in planning activities. The plans were sometimes enacted in the moment, for example, in the previous week several children were heard talking about volcanos, so the staff helped them to make one out of sand and created the eruption using vinegar and bicarbonate of soda. Photographs were taken to add to the children's learning journals.

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

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and*

*(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.*

*(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-*

*(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) The children had access to two activity rooms and the outdoor play areas on a daily basis. There were two activity rooms connected via double doors. The main room was set up in a number of defined interest areas with lots of room in and around each area for several children to work together in the space at the same time. Interest areas included sand area, kitchen, dress up area, painting area, construction area and dining area. There was also a large open space in the middle of the room for large group and floor play activities. The second room was set up with different interest areas than the main room including a large arts and crafts area, library and small world areas.

There were three outdoor play areas. The main area was the playground at the back of the premises. This space was used most frequently. The other outdoor play areas were across the yard/car parking area and included an orchard and a garden. These spaces were used when the weather was dry.

(b) The children could rest and relax when they wanted to throughout the day. There were quiet spaces such as the library in the back room where the children could rest and enjoy quiet time. Floor mats and cushions were available for the children to sit on. Sleep facilities were not required as all of the children were aged over three years old and attended for three hours per day.

(3)(a) There were three outdoor play areas to which the children had access on a daily basis. Each area was enclosed with walls or fences and gates. The ground surfaces in the main playground included grass, soft fall mats

and concrete. There was a covered area which enabled the children to play outdoors in all weathers. The garden and orchard had grass surfaces and mature trees which provided natural shelter.

## 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 service was very well equipped with a wide range and large quantity of toys, materials and furniture. There were tables and chairs in several areas in both rooms including the lunch table, tabletop activities table and a table in the kitchen area where children engaged with homemade playdough during the inspection. Seating at the tables was child sized chairs, stools or wooden benches.

Open shelves, hangers and display tables were used to store equipment in a manner that was clearly visible and easily accessible to the children. Wooden equipment such as the chairs and tables, stationary car, dolls house and kitchen units were repainted regularly to maintain them.

Other equipment included books, small world materials, sand table, tuff tray table, arts and craft supplies, painting easels, dress up clothing, large and small blocks and construction materials, puzzles and manipulative play materials.

Outdoor equipment included playhouses, pirate ship climbing unit, slides, bouncing tyre activity, wheelbarrows, push toys, balls, gardening equipment and seating areas.

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

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy and incorporated healthy eating activities in the curriculum throughout the year to teach the children about healthy eating. On the day of inspection the children were engaged in cutting and gluing pictures of their favourite foods into their learning journals, this was a one-to-one activity with one member of staff, which encouraged lots of conversation about food.

The children brought a packed lunch to eat during the morning at any time that suited them before 11am. There was a lunch table in the corner of the main room where small groups of children were seated throughout the morning enjoying their snack time with their friends. Each child brought a drink bottle for water that was refilled when required. Food eaten on the day of inspection included crackers, bread sticks, sandwiches, fromage frais, smoothies and fruit (red pepper, mandarins, grapes and bananas).

The service supplied a light snack of a plain biscuit and a drink of milk to all of the children at 11am.

### 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) Staff were responsible for recording the arrival and departure times of all children attending the service. These were recorded in paper based register books for this purpose.

(3)(a) Staff greeted any visitors to the service, such as the inspector, at the entrance door before allowing them access to the premises.

(b) A written record was maintained of any visitors to the service in a visitors sign-in book.

### 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) The registered provider held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a well-equipped first aid box on a shelf in the main room where it could be easily accessed when required.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending 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 firefighting 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 24 January 2024.
- (b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was serviced annually, most recently in October 2023. The smoke alarms were served by an electrician on an annual basis, most recently in December 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in each room of the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service had current insurance cover for a sessional service valid until 31 August 2024.