

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD006
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Baile Beag First Steps Creche
-------------------------	-------------------------------

Address of Service:	Ballybeg Community Centre, St. Saviour's Parish Centre Grounds, Ballybeg, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	X91 N265
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Doireann Nix
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date(s) of Inspection:	14/05/2026
-------------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	69	PM	71
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Community Care Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw E. Cullen
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Baile Beag First Steps Creche is a community-based service and is registered to provide a full-day care service operating from 08:15 to 17:15, for children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The service is based in a single-storey, purpose-built premises on the ground of St. Saviours Parish Centre. There are five care rooms, a kitchen, a sanitary area, a staff room, and an office. The outdoor play area is at the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 37 staff, including eight auxiliary staff members (the manager, the administration team, maintenance staff, and a chef). Four of the staff members were participating in an employment training scheme. All staff working directly with the children held a minimum of level 5 and above 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.

Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment;

Regulation 11 - Staff Ratios;

Regulation 17 – Information for parents;

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Regulation 19 – Health, Welfare and Development of Child;

Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The service had a designated person in charge and a person to deputise if required. Information outlining the line management structure, including the board of management, was displayed in the reception area. The staff names, positions and photographs were displayed in the reception area and at the entrance to each of their care rooms.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection details, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed three staff files which had not been previously reviewed.

(a)(b) Validated references were available to the inspector.

(c) Garda vetting was available for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years.

(d) Documents reviewed demonstrated that police vetting was not required for these staff.

(4)

On review of the staff files, evidence was available to demonstrate that all staff working with preschool children had achieved 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

(7)

Though discussion with management and staff and a review of documents available, evidence demonstrated that the management supervised and supported the staff team. Staff described how they had regular supervision with their team leaders and the manager. They described an annual two-day training event where the team comes together and are upskilled. They stated that the training delivered last August included Child Safety Awareness, and Mandated persons training and procedures around this reporting process. Management discussed how full team meetings occur bi-monthly and the content is informed by feedback from the staff via the fortnightly team leader meetings. At the last team meeting a discussion was held regarding outdoor play and the outcomes for children and how their experiences can be enhanced in the garden.

Management described how they are reviewing the current one-to-one support and supervision structure as a result of attending an external mentoring programme and reflecting on their communication strengths and skills.

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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

The was an adequate number of staff working with children throughout the day. On the inspector's arrival at 09:30 there were 69 children the care of 17 staff and at 14:00 there were 71 children in the care of 19 staff. There were two staff in the service who were not assigned care rooms but were available to cover breaks and to assist across the rooms if required.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The service has developed a parental handbook which was specific to each care room. Each handbook provided an overview of the service ethos and what parents should expect while their child is in attendance; information on outdoor play, the curriculum, sleep, and what to wear. Service information also provided an overview of the staff in the respective room, the opening hours, fees and some relevant policies for new parents.

The management team described how they communicate with parents though different platforms as they are aware of the barriers which can inhibit the information being communicated effectively. They display information attractively in the reception area using visuals with text. Parents also have access to two online application systems the service use for messaging and sending photographs of their children's activities during the day.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

The following was observed during the inspection:

On the inspectors' arrival children were eating breakfast in each of the five care rooms. Each room had a different breakfast served, for example, cereal and toast, beans and toast, scrambled eggs or cheese and brown bread. The chef described how these are offered to each room in rotation each day. There were snacks also available in addition to the planned menu during the day. A child in the Wobbler room indicated that they wanted some breadsticks between breakfast and lunch, and the staff asked if everyone would like a snack. The children who were interested were encouraged to sit at the table and were served. At this time, they were also offered their drinks of water. Mealtimes observed were unhurried social experiences in all rooms, staff sat with children and engaged in conversation. The children were encouraged to feed themselves appropriate to their stage of development and were assisted as required. During dinner in the junior preschool room, recent learning on the eating habits of herbivore dinosaurs was used as a playful tool to encourage the children to try extra vegetables. Staff members were observed to treat the children with respect and positivity. They were noted to sit or bend to the children's level when chatting, engaging in play or activities. In the Wobbler room a staff member was noted to ask children if they were ready for a nappy change, one child who was dancing to the nursery rhymes said no, the staff told them to keep dancing, and they could come the next time.

The staff in this room were observed to engage with children in a friendly manner and though discussion they demonstrated that were familiar with children's specific needs. One child who had returned to the service having been ill was given extra attention and cuddles as it was recognised that the child needed extra reassurance.

Children's learning and development was supported. A child in the Wobbler room was observed to practice new motor skills; the furniture and equipment was suitable to support this new skill. Staff, although engaged to other children reading books, kept a watchful eye in case they were needed to support the child.

Children were supported emotionally when required. A child was observed not to want to participate in preparation for graduation photographs in the preschool room, staff were noted to give them time and space and then engage with the child to join them in a photograph. The child was ready at this time to engage positively and join the group. In the junior preschool room, a child became upset when she could not find her bracelet, the staff

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

reacted promptly to support her to locate the item and together they came up with an idea to keep it safe in a 'special bag' with her name. The child was provided with lots of reassurance to ensure her personal belonging would remain safe.

Activities offered to the children were developmentally appropriate and appealing to the age and stage the children in the room. The layout of the Wobbler room allowed for children to access material and equipment as they pleased and staff engaged in interactive play with them, reading story's and building tall towers with blocks. In the changing area, a staff member supported children to use the steps and handrails to reach the changing mat giving them a sense of independence and achievement.

Staff in the junior preschool room demonstrated their awareness of capturing children's voices in creating a classroom contract. The children devised their own class 'rules' such as 'friends say nice things to each other' and 'friends take turns'. This was also displayed with photos of the children demonstrating these rules.

The staff teams demonstrated their knowledge of the children's developmental requirements. In the Preschool room children were noted to begin to get bored while waiting for their turn to be photographed when the staff began singing the song for the graduation, all the children joined in enthusiastically and this refocused their attention in a fun way.

Staff members detailed a revised key worker system which had been implemented this year. This meant parents had a key point of contact for their child in the service. Each staff member was also responsible for documenting children's learning monthly to share with parents.

Management discussed the importance of their ethos of parental support and partnership as a community service. Staff discussed how they record children's progress and the service offers parents an opportunity to face to face and phone parent meetings in November and April each year. This gives the staff and parents a chance to discuss the children's accomplishments and/or concerns in a supportive environment. The service offers many parental activities as part of the childcare service. For example, there were parents' lunches and a parents coffee morning.

During the day, appropriate interactions were observed with the staff team. In the preschool room staff were noted to chat and plan the next activity. Staff were observed to be respectful toward one another and agree an activity collectively. Staff appeared to be confident in their decision making. Staff in the Wobbler room described how they have the support of the supervisor if issues arise with a child, parent or colleague.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access. The opening mechanism was managed through an intercom system in the office.

The outdoor area of the premises was at the rear of the service and was fully enclosed.

Cleaning agents were stored out of the children's reach and in a storage room inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Warm water, soap and paper towels were available at each of the low wash handbasins in the rooms.

There was a full-time caretaker on the premises during the inspection. This staff member was observed to clean and maintain all the public areas throughout the day. Completed cleaning sheets were displayed.

Foot pedal bins were available throughout the premises.

Cots were placed more than 50cm apart.

A system was in place for the appropriate storage and sterilisation of children's soothers.

Administration of Medication:

Care plans for children with medical needs were available and staff were training in the administration of specification prescribed medication. Signed medication record books documented the details of any medications which had been administered in the service in line with the service policy on administration of medication.

Medications supplied by parents were stored securely and inaccessible to children.

Safe Sleep:

The sleep rooms were maintained at a comfortable temperature and children sleep records were maintained in a timely manner. Staff stayed in the cot room with children until they drifted off to sleep.