

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b> | TU2015WD006 |
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| <b>Name of Service:</b> | Baile Beag First Steps Creche |
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| <b>Address of Service:</b> | Ballybeg Community Centre, St. Saviour's Parish Centre Grounds, Ballybeg,<br>Waterford City, Co. Waterford |
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| <b>Eircode:</b> | X91 N265 |
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| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b> | Doireann Nix |
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| <b>Service type:</b> | Full Day, Part Time, Sessional |
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| <b>Date of Inspection:</b> | 10/09/2025 |
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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b> | AM | 68 | PM | 70 |
|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|

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| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b> | Community Care Centre,<br>HSE Buildings, Cork Road, Waterford City. |
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| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b> | A. Bradshaw E. Cullen |
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| <b>Title:</b> | Early Years Inspectors |
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### 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).

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| <b>Conditions if applicable</b> | Not applicable |
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### Description of service

Baile Beag First Steps Creche is a community service and is registered to provide a full-day care service from 08:15 to 17:15, to children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. The service is based in a single-storey, purpose-built premises. 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 36 staff, including seven auxiliary staff members (the manager, the administration team, maintenance staff, and a chef). Six 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 15 – Record of Preschool Child;  
Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service;  
Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play;  
Regulation 22 – Food and Drink;  
Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance;  
Regulation 25 – First Aid;  
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures;  
Regulation 28 - Insurance.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 - Record of Preschool child and Regulation 16 – Record in Relation to Pre-school Service.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play, as a result, the scope of the inspection included:

The toddler room,  
The wobbler room,  
The baby room.

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 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
- (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.

### Compliance Information

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

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

(2)

Following a review of previous inspection details, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge, the inspector reviewed seven 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 available demonstrated that police vetting was required for one staff member, and this was available on the day of the inspection.

(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

### 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)(2)

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children. There were 22 staff caring for 68 preschool children in the morning and 21 staff caring for 70 preschool children in the afternoon. Three of these staff were participating in an employment training scheme. The supervisor was available to offer support if required. The registered provider does not work directly with the children. There were an additional three preschool staff members on leave on the day of the inspection.

### 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 12 children’s enrolment forms was reviewed as part of the inspection process and was found to contain all the information required under part (a) – (i) of this regulation

### 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

Information required in this regulation from (a) to (k) was available to the inspector. This information was displayed on the noticeboard, included in the parents' handbook, on the online application, on the website and in the staff files.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities available indoors for the number of children attending the service. The baby, wobbler and toddler rooms were clean and organised. There was consideration given to the layout of the rooms to ensure children could play together in groups or individually. Children’s play and learning were supported through defined areas of interest and adequate materials and resources. The age and stage of development of children using each room were reflected in the design and resourcing to meet the varying learning needs in each group.

Children could directly access the enclosed outdoor play areas from each preschool room. The play spaces were free from hazards, and the equipment was safe for use by the age groups of children in attendance.

(1)(b) There were three sleep rooms available for use by children in the service. The baby sleep room had six cots and the wobbler sleep room had eight cots available. The toddler sleep room had one cot and four stackable beds; additional sleep mats were available in the toddler room cosy corner. There was an adequate number of cots and low-level beds available to meet the sleep requirements of children attending on the day of inspection.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. Some of the cot mattresses in the Wobbler room were not suitable for the children, as two of the mattresses were too small for the cot, and two others did not have waterproof protectors.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

## Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that new mattresses and additional mattresses protecters have been ordered. The daily room risk assessments have been emended to ensure correct reporting of and future issues with mattresses or other bedding.

## Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the receipt

A copy of the amended daily risk assessment.

## Summary Comment

The action submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified on inspection.

## 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

All food and drink were prepared onsite by the service chefs. A 3-week menu was available for review and detailed the breakfasts, mid-morning snacks, dinner, afternoon snack and evening snacks which were provided. On the day of inspection, staff informed inspectors that a selection of fresh fruit, cheese and toast had been served for breakfast. Mid-morning snacks were observed in the rooms with a selection of fruit available. Dinner served was roast beef, mashed potatoes, broccoli, cauliflower and mashed carrots. Additional portions were available when children requested them. Afternoon snack was a fruit smoothie and a selection of sandwiches. A separate menu was available for children in the baby room who had varying food requirements.

## 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-
- (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that children's attendance was recorded. The service used an online application to record the times of arrival and collection of each child.
- (3) (b) The inspector was required to sign in and out of the building on their arrival and departure.

## 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 has ensured that a person trained in first aid was available to the children at all times. Seven staff members were trained to the first aid responder standard.
- (2)(a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were in each room and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position. Additional first aid kits were stored in the office and the kitchen.

### 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) Fire drills were completed monthly, and a written record was available to the inspector. The last fire drill was carried out on 8 July 2025.
  - (b) A maintenance record was available to demonstrate the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and fire alarms. The maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on 24 September 2024 and on the smoke alarms on 1 July 2025.
- (4)
- A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in each care room and the main hallways.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service was insured for up to 83 children at any one time from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026