

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD053
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Choill Mhic Thomáisín
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Address of Service:	Graigseoinín, Coill Mhic Thomáisín, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X42 Y568
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maireade Nories
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	04/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services Cork Road Waterford
Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan
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
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Description of service

Naíonra Choíll Mhíc Thomáisín is a community-based pre-school service located on the outskirts of Kilmacthomas village in Co Waterford. The service was set up in 1982 and is operating from a purpose-built premises since 1998. The service has one large pre-school room, and two satellite rooms the 'seomra spraoi' (fun room), the 'crannóg' (rest room), toilet accommodation and office/storage space. The outdoor play space and garden is on the grounds of the premises and is adjacent to the building. The setting provides a sessional service for children aged between 2 years, 10 months and 5 years. The pre-school is conducted through the Irish language, with the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme. The opening hours are 08:45hrs to 11:45hrs. Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are two childcare workers employed to work directly with the children in the service, the pre-school leader and a staff member.

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 following regulations were inspected on the day;

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels.

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 25 - First aid.

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 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-

- (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*

(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) The pre-school leader was the designated person in charge. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) At all times during the inspection the pre-school leader was on the premises.
- (c) Naíonra Choíll Mhíc Thomáisín was governed by a voluntary management committee of parents. There was documentation available that demonstrated the management structure for the service which identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service.
- (2)
- There was no change in the staff since the last inspection.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in the last 36 months on behalf of staff working directly with the children.
- (4)
- There was evidence that both staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 and level 9 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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*

Compliance Information

- (1)
There were 12 children aged 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 2 staff.
- (3)
The staff: child ratios exceeded the requirements for sessional care needed under the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed in relation to meeting children's care and programme of activities.
- Naíonra Choíll Mhíc Thomáisín operated a community-based service that encouraged parental support and participation. The pre-school leader informed the inspector that the programme for the service was play based and strongly influenced by the Reggio Emilia approach to early childhood care and education. The preschool leader explained that this approach highlighted the environment as the third teacher with an emphasis on the organisation of space and design in order to support children as active learners.
- This was demonstrated by the carefully planned layout of the quality furniture, equipment and toys organised as follows: The main room had a large area set up as a home corner that was well stocked with children's kitchen play materials and a baby area with a supply of dolls and prams. The children had access to a messy play area with two sand play areas a plumbed sink and supplies of open-ended play materials such as shells, stones and twigs. The children were observed to have access to these areas at all times during the session.

There were two satellite rooms 'Seomra spraoi' and the 'Crannóg'.

The 'Seomra Spraoi' was a purpose-built room for physical activity located off the main room. This room had a climbing wall, numerous sizes and shapes of soft foam platforms and a large wall mount of mirrors strategically placed around the room and on the ceiling to enable children to view themselves during their activity. This room was mainly used in the earlier part of the session with small groups.

The 'Crannóg' was a circular (igloo shaped) structure designed to be comfortable and relaxing off the main playroom which provided a calm quiet place for children to retreat for a small break.

On the day children played in small groups in the well-resourced rich environment, while the play group leader was gathering photographs and collating children's "mise" a handmade book for the children to have as keep sakes.

The preschool leader spoke of one activity that the children had completed to support their sense of identity. This was carried out by giving children cameras to take home, with the co-operation of parents or guardians, children were requested to take photos of their choice. When developed some of these were wall mounted where children could see and start conversations with their peers. In another exercise, the children were encouraged to draw a map of where they lived, these maps were stored on accessible shelving in group folders for the children to revisit and talk about them with their friends. The preschool leader explained how this activity had proved invaluable in promoting a sense of place and belonging.

On the previous day in the service the children had a potato party with the potatoes they had grown. The preschool leader highlighted the importance of children understanding how the potatoes had got to the table by involving the children in the digging, washing, and cooking of the potatoes.

The final rally together for the day was observed as the preschool leader invited each child individually to bring a chair to join and form a circle. When all the children were assembled the preschool leader spoke in Irish in a low voice asking the children to recall who was not in attendance on the previous day for the potato party. These children were handed their share of the harvested potatoes in small bags to take home. Children were supported and helped to put on their coats and Irish words were reinforced throughout the interaction.

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)

Both staff members working in the service had current First Aid Responder training for children.

(2)

(a) There was a first aid bag stored on a high shelf in the office, that was easily accessible in the event of being needed.

(b) The first aid bag was suitably equipped and available.