

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH003		
Name of Service:	Treasure Island Early Years Service		
Address of Service:	5 Arcadia Court, Athlone, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N37 AY80		
Name of Registered Provider:	Bernie Egan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	15/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath		
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes		
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

This private service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme from 09:00-12:00 Monday to Friday. The age range of the children attending the service is two to six years of age.

The service consists of a large playroom in a purpose- built unit on the grounds of the Registered Provider’s home. There is an outdoor play area adjacent to the service. A sheltered outdoor play area is located to the side of the service. The service is based in Athlone town in Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

Three staff members are employed in the service. The registered provider and three staff members were working with the children on the 15 October 2025.

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.

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.

Acknowledgements

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The registered submitted a change in circumstance in respect of the operational hours of the service. This change was accepted by TUSLA registration office on the 28 July 2025.

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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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)

A designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

The management structure was displayed in the pre-school service identifying the role of each staff member.

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

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a previous employer in respect of the staff members. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four staff files reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as none of the staff members had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of the new staff member.

(4)

The staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education Level 6 to Level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 children.
- (3)
There were nineteen children attending the service being supervised directly by the registered provider and three staff members.

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*
 - (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)(a)(b)
- There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children eagerly awaited a visit from the local Garda for “ Irish Road Safety week ” organised by the National Road Safety Authority as they played games using a traffic light system in the outdoor play area. Children enjoyed listening attentively to the Garda in the pre-school room,

having their photographs taken with the Garda and the Garda patrol car. Children were given the “Safe Cross Code” leaflet to bring home to their parents.

Children enjoyed the freedom of movement from the indoor and outdoor play environments and were happily engaged in various activities supported by staff. Small group work was observed as the staff sat with and supported a small number of children at their various tabletop activities.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they washed their hands and went to the toilet supported by staff. Children were reminded to use the toilet as needed. Respiratory etiquette was adhered to as a snuffle station was noted for children to access tissues and hand sanitiser as needed. Children were encouraged to be independent as they took care of their belongings and dressed for outdoor play.

Children enjoyed their healthy snacks prepared by the parent which consisted of sandwiches, yoghurts and a selection of fruit and vegetables with water to drink. A potable water station was noted for children to serve themselves when they were thirsty. Children engaged in conversations with the staff and their friends as they all ate lunch together in the pre-school room. A little helper system was in place as children handed lunches out to their peers. Children were observed to be kind and assisted their friends to get ready for outdoor play.

A key person system was in operation in the service which helped to promote the emotional security of children attending the service. Good communication was observed between staff and children as the staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and at snack time. Children requiring extra support and supervision were assisted by staff members. Access and Inclusion plans were in place for children. Minor behaviour management issues were handled in a calm and positive manner by the staff when children became frustrated and required one to one intervention. Good teamwork amongst staff was observed throughout the inspection.

The pre-school room was bright and colourful with children’s Halloween themed artwork and posters displayed incorporating the community and getting ready to attend the local national school. A range of developmentally appropriate experiences to meet children’s learning needs were available in the pre-school rooms. Areas of interest included a home area, dress up with a mirror, construction area, hibernation and sensory trays. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest area after snack time.

Partnership in parents was noted as a parent handbook was displayed in the service. A verbal handover to parents was observed at collection time. The registered stated regular updates and information are sent to parents via a short messaging service (SMS). A monthly newsletter is sent to the parents outlining the upcoming activities in the service. The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Adequate and suitable play equipment and materials were provided in both the indoor and outdoor environments.

(b)

Cosy couches with cushions were in place in the playroom for children to rest and relax.

(4)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by fencing. A large natural grass area and cobbled lock surface was noted. Toys and equipment included a mud kitchen, a wooden boat, a wooden car, a climbing frame, a large playhouse with slide, a basketball hoop, a sensory garden, a bug hotel and natural trees for climbing. An enclosed sheltered area with a large sand pit and a free play area was available for children's use. A shed was available for storage of toys and equipment.

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

There was a huge variety of suitable and sufficient play materials and equipment to support children for various forms of play in the indoor and outdoor environments in the service.

The tables and chairs were child sized suitable to their age and development.

Equipment was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.

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 to the service was safe and secure. The front door to the service was locked which ensured no unauthorised access to the children. The inspector signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation in the service. The temperature of the water recorded at the wash hand basins was 31 degrees Celsius. Natural ventilation was in operation in the sanitary accommodation.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable foods in lunch boxes. The fridge temperature was maintained within the correct limits was under 5 degrees Celsius.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. Medication was stored safely in a locked cupboard in the pre-school room.

Fire Safety:

The fire emergency exits were free from obstruction in the premises. A fire assembly point was noted to the front of the premises.

Outing:

The registered provider stated outings are undertaken by the service. A risk assessment was reviewed for the service's most recent outing to the local fire station.

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)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

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)

Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises for the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

An equipped first aid box was located in the pre-school room.

(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)

There was a record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on the 24 September 2025.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarm were serviced in May and September 2025.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in a conspicuous location in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The layout of the pre-school room, the sanitary facilities and the outdoor play area allowed for children to be supervised by adults during the inspection. Children were observed to be handed over to their parent/guardian at collection time by the registered provider and staff members.

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 the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted was March 2026.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider furnished the required information during the inspection.