

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW190
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Name of Service:	Naíonra Lacain
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Address of Service:	Lacken National School, Lacken, Blessington, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	W91 CY82
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Jones
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare.
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien
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	NA
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Description of service

Naíonra Lacain is registered to provide sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 12:30, Monday to Friday. On the day of inspection, the service was operating from 09:00 to 12:00.

The service operates from a single room in Lacken Primary School in a rural area of Blessington, Co. Wicklow. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs two staff who were both working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service but was present for the closing meeting.

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/ records/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes 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

(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,
- (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)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The files of two adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)

Four validated, written references were available from a past employer for the two staff members.

- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the two adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
Police vetting was required and was available for the two staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.
- (4)
Records were available evidencing that two staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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.*
- (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 at all times during the inspection.
- (3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were eight children attending being supervised by two adults on the day of 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)
Nine records were available and were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (i) above.

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:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(h)

Details of the attendance of each child were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.

(k)

Six accident and incidents records were available and were reviewed. These records were completed appropriately.

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

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring their lunch in from home. Lunch took place at 11:30. Staff were observed eating with children at lunch time and children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers and staff during their meal. Lunch time was observed to be a relaxed, sociable occasion with children given time to finish their meal. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and children were given water with their meal.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. Inspectors observed children cleaning up after their play and lunch and using the toilet independently. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time. The service had a helper system in place with children given responsibility for handing out drinks and lunches and helping with circle time.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour management policy. Staff were observed acknowledging children's achievements and efforts positively. Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs and stories which were observed during the inspection. Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection time. Staff were observed to work well as a team, frequently communicating with each other in relation to the daily routine and children's needs.

The care room was bright and was arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included arts and crafts materials, a home corner, small world toys, construction toys, manipulative play and a rest area and library. The care room provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and was adequately resourced with a variety of materials.

The environment was laid out to support the children's independence. Low level storage was provided for coats. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care room.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area was directly accessible from the care room and had artificial grass surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. All children accessed the outdoor area on the day of inspection. Children were observed to be engaged in their play with adults supporting them as needed. Children were observed engaging in energetic and imaginative play in the outdoor area.

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 to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet and before lunch.
- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- Children's lunches were stored in the refrigerator.