

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC018		
Name of Service:	Súgradh Pre-School		
Address of Service:	The Old Schoolhouse, Ballygiblin, Mitchelstown, Co Cork		
Eircode:	P67 PW89		
Name of Registered Provider:	Michael O'Sullivan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	18/02/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square Mallow Cork P51DD5Y		
Inspection undertaken by:	B Fraher		
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	N/A
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Description of service

Súgradh Pre-school is a private sessional early years service in operation since 2016. The premises is located in a single storey building adjacent to Ballygiblin National School which was previously the old school house. The service caters for children aged from 2 to 6 years of age with opening hours from 9:00 until 12:30, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. This multiple service also facilitates school age care. The service has access to one classroom, two children's toilets, one adult toilet and an office/kitchen. There is a second room available for the school age service. There are two secure outdoor play areas located at both sides of the building.

Staffing

There is a total of six staff employed by the service, one of whom is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). The registered provider is not service based. On the day of inspection four of these staff were on duty.

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.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the children, registered provider, person in charge and staff 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) The service had a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named deputy in the service that could deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge and the deputy were on duty at the service when the inspector arrived. The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy were on duty at all times during the hours of operation.
- (c) There was clear evidence on inspection of the management structure in place and the specific roles of each staff member. This was on display on the notice board.
- (2) The recruitment records in relation to seven adults, six of whom were employed in the service and working directly with the children and the registered provider were the subject of inspection.
- (a) Of the 14 required references, 9 were from previous employers with required records of validation on file.
- (b) Of the 14 required references, 5 were from another source other than a previous employer with a record of validation on file.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all of the six staff and the registered provider. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
- (d) Police vetting was required and available for one of seven adults as they lived outside of the state for longer than six consecutive months.
- (4) Records demonstrated that the six adults working directly with the children had achieved a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 to level 8 as listed 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) At the time of inspection, there was an adequate number of adults responsible for the direct care of the children in attendance at all times.

(3) The adult to child ratio were observed to meet the minimum requirement over the duration of the inspection. The 14 children attending the service were supervised directly by 3 adults.

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) The service has 19 early years children registered and a sample of 10 records were inspected. They were found to contain the required information as listed (a) through to (i).

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,

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through direct observation and discussion with the staff and examination of the relevant documents:

Basic needs:

- Snacks provided by the parents/guardians were observed to be healthy and nutritious. Children were observed eating filled sandwiches, scones, rice cakes, cheese, yogurts and a variety of fruits.
- Staff sat at the tables during snack time, interacting with the children and were observed helping and assisting the children where necessary.
- Supervision was provided for the children, as they accessed the adjacent sanitary facilities, which were located separately from their care room.
- The weather on the day of inspection was cold and each child was appropriately dressed with coats and hats while playing in the outdoor play area. A roofed area was also available to play in if needed.
- Children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of a child size vinyl sofa with a mat in front of it.
- Appropriate seating was available in the form of low-level tables and chairs.
- Children's independence was promoted by staff in the care room. An example of this was children put on their own coats, tidied up after play and obtained their own lunch boxes from the refrigerator.

- Drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day in the care room.
- Indoors, low-level open shelving units ensured children could freely access materials and resources, promoting independence and choice making. A range of materials were offered throughout the service, such as dolls, kitchens, a train set, cars, dress up costumes, puzzles and art material.

Supporting relationships:

- The atmosphere was observed to be relaxed in the care room at all times during the inspection and teamwork was evident between the staff and the children.
- The inspector observed an upset child to be comforted by a staff member in the outdoor area who responded positively to the child.
- Family photos and birthday calendars were displayed on the walls in the care room which promoted a sense of belonging for the children.
- A keyworker approach was used in the service, with allocated staff responsible for recording observations and completing the learning journal for the assigned group of children.
- Staff in the care room were observed to engage with the children in both group and individual activities by getting down to their level and maintaining eye contact while discussing and helping children with their chosen task. This was observed on numerous occasions for example with staff assisting children with a train set, magnifying glasses, making puzzles, artwork, using magnetic bricks and playing ball in the outdoor area. Group discussion was observed on the weather, days of the week and plans for days off in the care room. The staff were also observed drawing pictures with chalk in the outdoor area and singing with the children indoors which the children visibly enjoyed.
- Staff were observed encouraging positive behaviour. This was observed when staff encouraged children to take turns and used a sand timer in this process when children were using toys that more than one person wanted.
- Comprehensive individual care plans were developed for children who required them.
- In conversation, the staff stated that the service communicated with parents and guardians by phone, text message, email or face to face at drop off or collection. A yearly meeting was also offered to each parent /guardian to discuss each child's progress since starting in the service.

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 windows in the care rooms were out of reach of the children which ensured the safety of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The toys and play equipment assessed were in good condition.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure space for the children with a metal gate and metal railing. This prevented children gaining unsupervised access to an unsafe area.
- The first aid box was stored out of reach of the children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes accessible to the children on the day of inspection.

Infection control:

- Hand washing facilities were accessible to the children with warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels. Children were observed to wash their hands before their snack time.
- Lidded pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the sanitary area and the care room.
- Children's bags and coats were stored off the ground.
- A refrigerator was available in the care room for the storage of perishable foods.
- Staff were observed sanitising the tables before snack time ensuring the areas were kept clean and hygienic.
- A tissue station was available which was accessible to the children for respiratory hygiene needs.

Administration of medication:

- The person in charge informed the inspector that no regular medicine was being administered to a child currently in the service. One child had emergency medication with a care plan in place and the person in charge informed the inspector that staff were competent in administering this if needed.

- Temperature reducing medicine was stored in its original container, out of reach of the children and was in date.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were noted to be free from obstruction.
- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

Garda vetting was available for six staff members and the registered provider. However; two vetting disclosures were not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12. Renewal of Garda vetting'.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

Garda Vetting applications have been submitted for both staff, one of which was expired four weeks and the other two days. The service has created a Garda vetting list as a reminder of future disclosure expiry dates.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Evidence received of the two applications submitted and the Garda vetting list completed.

Summary Comment

Evidence of an application for two staff for Garda vetting was reviewed however, a copy of the complete Garda vetting has not been submitted for two of staff to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The noncompliance in relation to Regulation 23 remains out outstanding.

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 each child was checked in and out of the service.

(3)

(b) A daily record of visitors to the premises was kept in a visitor logbook which was stored at one of the entrance doors to the premises. The inspector was requested to signed in and out from the 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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 drill records were reviewed. Evidence was available to show fire drills were practiced and recorded on a monthly basis. Records showed that the last fire drill was completed 19 January 2026.

(b) The certification of servicing for the firefighting equipment indicated this was carried out on the 5 December 2025 and the certification of servicing for the smoke alarm was dated 25 November 2025.

(2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

(4) The services fire evacuation procedure was clearly displayed at the fire exit doors in the care room and hallway.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that adequate insurance was in place for the service. The insurance policy commenced on 28 March 2025 and expired on 27 March 2026.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(b) safe and secure,

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Compliance Information

(b) The entrance to the service was secure on arrival. This restricted unauthorised access to the building and helped to prevent the risk of children exiting unsupervised.

(d) A cleaning schedule was in place at the service for the care room and sanitary facilities, which appeared clean and well maintained. No repair needs were evident in the sanitary area.