

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2016CC502
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Muin Preschool
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	The Green Rooms, Brocklesby Street, Blackpool, Co. Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	T23 ER27
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Kate Gaffney
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	28/05/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	20	PM	6
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Mary's Health Campus, Gurrabraher, Cork T23 X440
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M Creagh & D Prendergast
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspectors

### 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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Muin Preschool is a privately owned part time and sessional service, that is registered to cater for children aged 2 to 6 years. It facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education programme. The service is run from a converted warehouse unit, in a small industrial site, in a residential area in Blackpool, Cork. There are currently two rooms that have been adapted to provide an early years service. The children also have access to a stage hall area located beside the two playrooms. A dance company operates from the hall area each evening. The children have access to a small designated outdoor play area beside the early years facility. The registered hours of operation are from 9am to 2pm, however the service is currently operating from 9am to 1:30pm, Monday to Friday. A registered school aged care service is in operation each evening.

### Staffing

A total of nine adults are attached to the early years service, including the registered provider, who is not based at the setting. The eight staff members who work directly with the children include two adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) support scheme and two relief staff.

### 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.

## Additional Information

A referral was made to Better Start Quality Development Programme on 6 June 2025 with the permission of the person in charge.

## Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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

(1) The service was found to be operating within its approved registered status.

### 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,*
- (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 registered provider had appointed a person in charge of operating the service, along with a deputy person in charge.
- (b) The deputy was working at the service when the inspectors arrived. The person in charge arrived within five minutes and was available for the remainder of the inspection. Review of the staffing records indicated that either the person in charge or the deputy was on duty at all times.
- (2) Recruitment records in respect of the nine staff members attached to the service were assessed. The following information was obtained:
- (a) Fourteen of the required written and validated references were from past employers.
- (b) Four written and validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine 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 available for the adult who had lived outside the State, while over the age of 18 years. A translation of the vetting into English was also on file.
- (4) Records demonstrated that seven of the adults who worked directly with the children, had achieved major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education, as listed on the National Framework of Qualifications. A Letter of Qualification Recognition was available for the eighth adult.

### 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,*

### Compliance Information

- (1) There were appropriate numbers of staff working with the pre-school children at all times to meet the needs of the children in attendance.
- (2) The required adult to child ratio was observed. In the morning, there were 20 children in attendance, aged 3 to 4 ½ years, with 4 adults present. In the afternoon, there were 6 children in attendance, aged 3 to 4 ½ years, with 3 adults present.
- (8)(a) The registered provider did ensure that a minimum of 2 adults were on the premises at all times during the hours of operation.

### 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)

#### Basic needs:

- The mobility of the children was encouraged, with children observed to move freely in all the spaces accessible to them. It was clear that the staff had a good understanding of each child's specific needs.
- Children were observed handwashing before snack time. Staff supported and encouraged children to be independent, developing each child's self-help skills.
- Children were allowed to choose their activities inclusive of tabletop activities, jigsaws, building blocks, art, dolls, dress up play, and story time.
- Individual water bottles were freely available to the children throughout the day, and they were stored on a child height shelf.
- There was a rest area available to the children, consisting of soft, padded furnishings, and located beside the library to allow the children to rest and relax when required.

- The children were facilitated to eat and drink at snack time. One child indicated that they were hungry before this time and a snack was given. Children’s snacks were provided by their parents/ guardians and the service also provided additional food if needed.
- The children had unlimited access to the toilets, and the independent use of the toilet was encouraged and supported by the adults.

### 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 main entrance was secured and prevented children from exiting unsupervised and any unauthorised access to the service.
- The emergency fire doors were clearly identified and were unobstructed.
- No hot drinks were observed to be consumed by the staff near the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a manner that was inaccessible to children.
- The windows in the service were not accessible to children.
- The toys and play materials were in good condition and free from pinch and crush points.

##### Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, paper hand towels and there was lidded, pedal operated bins throughout the service.
- Handwashing by the children took place under the supervision of the adults prior to snack time.
- Adequate ventilation of the care rooms and sanitary areas was ensured through open windows and mechanical ventilation.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered during the inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

- The fire doors were unobstructed.
- Firefighting equipment was suitably fixed to the walls.

## Non-Compliance Information

### Infection Control:

1. The wooden low children's table was chipped and there was evidence of exposed porous wood, which posed a risk of cross infection as it could not be easily cleaned.
2. Some of the children's perishable snacks were not stored in the fridge, which posed a risk of cross contamination and food spoilage. This issue was identified in the last two inspections, dated 19/06/19 and 06/05/22. The previous CAPA responses noted a refrigerator was purchased for use in the preschool room which was observed on the day of inspection. The CAPA response further noted that parents will be requested to label their children's lunch boxes and lunch boxes would be placed in the refrigerator, however this was not observed on the day of inspection. On the day of inspection, the person in charge stated that they had given parents the responsibility to pack perishable foods in zip lock bags if they required refrigeration and lunch boxes were not placed in the refrigerator.

## Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. The person in charge reported the table was disposed of in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action CAPA form dated 1 July 2025. The person in charge also stated she would act promptly in removing unsuitable items in accordance with the monthly safety audit.
2. The children's food will be stored daily in the refrigerator. A message was sent to parents to highlight the need to place perishables items in ziplocked bags so there is sufficient space to store all such items in the refrigerator. The person in charge committed to checking each lunch box for any perishable items to ensure that food is refrigerated, once children arrive at the service.

### Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentary evidence.
2. Documentary and photographic evidence.

## Summary Comment

The documentation submitted by the person in charge relating to the non-compliances under Regulation 23 was reviewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirements. The actions taken will be reviewed at the next inspection.

### 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 available First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates demonstrated that five of the adults had completed this training. At least one of these adults was consistently on duty at the service, during the hours of operation.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

While it was acknowledged that the first aid box was stored out of reach of the children, sufficient supplies were not maintained. There were only four triangular bandages available, where six were required. Additional eye pad and medium wound dressings were also required and there were no large sterile wound dressings in stock.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) The first aid box has been checked and replenished.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(a)(b) Photographic evidence and a copy of the receipt for the purchase of first aid supplies.

#### Summary Comment

The response from the person in charge was assessed and accepted in meeting the requirements of Regulation 25.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

### Compliance Information

- a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises appeared safe and secured. The internal and external doors were secured as required and the outdoor area was secured with a surrounding wall. This prevented any child gaining access to the car park and prevented unauthorised adults from gaining access to the children.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould or stuffiness.
- (d) The service was well maintained, and routine cleaning schedules were in place.
- (e) The service had adequate and suitable sanitary facilities nearby the care rooms for the number of children attending.