

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2018CE503

Name of Service: Naíonra Dearcán Beaga Teoranta

Address of Service: Gaelscoil Donnacha Rua, Bothar Linne, Shannon, Co. Clare

Eircode: V14 AY84

Name of Registered Provider: Eilis Wall

Service type: Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 29/01/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate
Tusla Child and Family Agency
Primary Care Centre
Station Road
Ennis
County Clare

Inspection undertaken by: A.McCarthy

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

Naíonra Dearcán Beaga Teoranta was established in 2018, in Shannon, County Clare. Care and education are facilitated on a part-time and sessional basis for children ranging in age from two to six years. The childcare facility operates Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 12:00 and 08:50 to 13:50. The service operates in an open plan room in a log cabin on the school grounds of Gaelscoil Donnacha Rua National School. An enclosed outdoor play area is provided adjacent to the log cabin.

Staffing

The registered provider, the manager, four adults and a relief person are employed by the service. On the 29 January 2025 the manager and four adults worked directly with the children in attendance. The registered provider does not work in the childcare facility.

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 and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (2) (8)(a)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a)

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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. 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 manager, 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,
- (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 manager was the person in charge and a person were available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The manager and a named person to deputise were available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Seven files were available in respect of the registered provider, the adults employed by the service and the relief person. The findings included the following:

(a)

Thirteen written and validated references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

(b)

One written and validated reference was available for an adult from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the seven adults employed by the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was not required for the adults working in the service as the adults had not lived in another state for a period longer than six months.

(4)

The six adults employed to work directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 9 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.

(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)

During the inspection an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(2)

On the 29 January 2025 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. The manager and three adults cared for the fourteen children in attendance in the morning and eight children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the children.

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a caring and respectful manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive manner, used soft tones of voice, engaged with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance and comfort. The adults offered praise and encouragement, and the children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. A key person approach was observed in each care room, the staff demonstrated an appropriate level of knowledge of the children's interests, and individual capabilities. The children were notified and consulted in advance of changes in the activities. The transitions in the programme of care were completed cohesively in a calm manner in the care rooms.

The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. Staff supervised and treated the children in a sensitive manner while the children used the toilet. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care needs. The infant's sleep was attended to on an individual basis and an alternative area and activities were offered for children who did not wish to sleep. The infants were encouraged to feed themselves and promoted to be independent. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and unhurried period. The children were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and learning activities and the children were observed to be fully engaged and included in all activities in the indoor and outdoor environments. The children transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor area to engage in play based activities.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments were appropriately resourced with a range of developmentally challenging equipment and materials. The care room was bright and colourful displaying the children's artwork and illustrated learning aids in English and Irish. A visual display was available demonstrating a photographic illustration of the children's routine. Adequately resourced areas of interest included an art and sand play section, low level tables and chairs for tabletop activities, a dress up area with a large range of costumes, a kitchen and shop corner. Three shelving units accommodated individually, labelled containers with a large range of construction, literacy, pretend and manipulative equipment. The outdoor area located to the side of the service accommodated a large wooden pirate ship with two slides, a mud kitchen and sand play areas. A large play area was available for the children to engage in gross motor activities.

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 secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within. The children were supervised at all times during the inspection in the indoor and outdoor environments.
- The children's arrival and departure from the service was recorded in the record book.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, lined pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, using the toilet and before mealtime.
- The children's perishable food items were stored correctly in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection.
- A policy and documentation were available to inform parents/guardians and the adults working in the service of the service's administration of medication procedure.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageway were clear from obstruction.
- The fire exit routes and fire assembly points were readily identified with signage.
- The service demonstrated evidence of completing monthly fire drills to prepare the service to respond in the event of fire.

Outing:

- An outing was not conducted on the day of inspection. A policy was available to inform parents/guardians and the adults working in the service of the service procedure for conducting outings.

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)

An adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the care room in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out by the service. The last fire drill took place on the 13 January 2025.

(b)

Up-to-date records of the number, type and maintenance service were available for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. The most recent service of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system took place respectively on the 08 October 2024 and 25 February 2024.

(4)

A fire action notice was available demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two children attending on a part-time and sessional basis. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.