

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2019GY008
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Name of Service:	Tir na nÓg Carnmore
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Address of Service:	Carnmore National School, School Road, Carnmore, Co. Galway
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Eircode:	H91 PT80
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aisling Hyland
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM	n/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Nic Dhonnacha
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
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Description of service

Tir na nÓg pre-school offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) and sessional care programme from 9.00hrs to 12.00hrs, Monday to Friday. This sessional service is located on the grounds of a national school in the village of Carnmore, Co. Galway. The premises operates from a stand-alone modular building to the rear of the primary school. It consists of a large playroom, an entrance hall, kitchen, and sanitary areas. The pre-school caters for children between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years of age, for 38 weeks of the year. Additionally, an afterschool programme from 13.30hrs to 18.00hrs is available for school aged children. A quiet rest area is available for the children to rest and relax. The pre-school children have two designated outdoor play areas, including a decking area, for play activities and fresh air. Additionally, the children have access to the playgrounds and pitches of the national school. A child centred play-based curriculum focusing on the children's emerging interests with elements of Montessori is offered.

Staffing

The registered provider works between this service and a partner pre-school. There is a designated person in charge and a deputy person in charge. There are 3 staff working in the premises who hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a Level 5 on the National Qualification Framework, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. On the day of inspection, there were 2 staff, working in the premises directly caring for the children.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19,23,24, 25, 26, 28 and 30.

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 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,*
- (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 was the designated person in charge and there was a named person able to deputize.
- (b) There was a manager on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)(a)&(b) Six written validated references on file in respect of the three staff members were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for the three staff members.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one staff member who lived and worked longer than six months in a state other than the State for longer than six months while over the age of 18 years.
- (4) Documentary evidence indicated that the three staff working directly with and caring for the pre-school children in the service, had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 6 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

- (1) The pre-school attendance records were reviewed for the previous 3 weeks indicating an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was correct and maintained on the day of inspection.
There was 2 staff members working directly with and caring for 9 children.
- (8)(c) Not applicable, as the registered provider does not operate the service single handed.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

(1) (a)

- Healthy eating was promoted within the pre-school and a healthy eating policy was available on request. At approx. 10.20hrs, the children had their snacks provided by their parents and guardians. Snacks consisted of a selection of sandwiches, bread rolls, brown bread, cheese, yogurts, ham, and pieces of fruit.
- Appropriate crockery and cutlery were offered to the children at snack time suitable for their ages and stages of development.
- Drinking water was available and accessible at all times for the children when thirsty both indoors and outdoors.
- All the children were toilet trained and either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- The children could move about freely in their Playroom, they were supported to interact appropriately with their peers and were confident and comfortable in their environment.
- On the day of inspection, all the children had the opportunity to play in the outdoor play areas.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS

- On speaking with staff, the inspector was informed that they provided parents with daily information on their child's experiences in the pre-school including the child's likes, interests, preferences and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection times, via text messages, by email, phone calls and by a private media messaging application. Additionally, parents and guardians were spoken to at drop off and collection time.
- Staff advised the service offered a newsletter to parents and guardians at the beginning of each term. In addition, twice yearly, parent teachers' meetings were offered, and a questionnaire was used to collate information from the parents in relation to suggestions to enhance care provision. The children's learning and key observations were discussed at these meetings and records were maintained.
- A key worker system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key worker was to liaise with parents and guardians.
- Individual learning journals were used to capture the profile of each child attending the pre-school. Each child's areas of interest, strategies and learning goals were captured by the staff showing various themes engaged in, a related description, photographs of the child and their art and craft activities. A sample of themes in the learning journals covered to date included - all about me, holidays, my handprints,

emotions, show and tell, Santa visit, messy play, miss Polly had a dolly, the year of the dragon, caterpillars, Easter, Spring, Christmas, three little pigs, Halloween, my family and love the earth.

- Observations were also collated under the heading's description / activity, learning story and what is next, with links relating to the child's well-being, identity, belonging, exploring, and thinking and communicating.
- The children were cared for by the staff in a kind and gentle manner. The staff were observed speaking to the children at their height, listening attentively and responding in a quiet, calm, and sensitive manner.
- The children were observed at free play, at circle time, counting, listening to stories, singing songs in preparation for graduation day, taking turns, matching items with pictures, comparing opposites, building blocks, puzzle making, using jugs and joining links / connectors together.
- In the outdoor area, the children engaged in running, chasing games, sitting on the see saw, playing in the wooden bus, using push cars and building blocks.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- The playroom was bright and spacious, the area was clean and colourful.
- Play equipment and materials were freely accessible and available to the children.
- There was a selection of child sized seating and low tables for tabletop activities.
- There was child size soft seating in the form of couches, disc shaped cushions and matting in the playroom where a child could rest and relax if they choose to.

Items in the Playroom included.

- Low level shelving was accessible to the children with boxes of shapes, threading material, links, connectors, blocks, counters, puzzles, jugs, bowls, cash registers, timers, crayons, paper, markers, art trays, paints, black boards, chinks, dinosaurs, animals and figurines.
A home corner, with food items, utensils and crockery, dolls, cots, transport vehicles including cars, trucks, farmyards, a dress up area and helmets.
A nature table with acorns, shells, flowers, birds, a fox, straw, acorns, and stones. A tuff table for sand, rice, or water play, today it was observed to have a sea world display. A sensory fish floor display.
- Displayed on the walls were educational posters and artwork, topics of interest, themes, visual aids and story boards. Displays included family artwork, animals, emotions, I love been busy, I am chart, key

worker system, mirrors our weather chart, days of the week, shapes, a kindness chart, and a planning board. There were coloured lanterns and globes, hanging from the ceiling in the playroom.

OUTDOOR PLAY AREA:

- There was a designated outdoor play area to the side of the premises with a bark surface and was surrounded by wooden fencing. There was a large yellow bus, a climbing wall, a mounted water activity feature, mounted mirrors, chairs, logs, a fairy fort, sensory table, slides, tyres, and a mud kitchen with pots, pans, and crockery.
- To the front of the premises, there was an area with a concrete surface. Items in this area included, tricycles, scooters, go carts, see saws, garage station, rockers, goal posts, a wooden playhouse, mounted blackboards, and a decking area with a shelter for inclement weather conditions. There were additional play equipment and materials available in a secure storage area on the decking, which staff advised were rotated on a theme or seasonal basis.

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:

- There was a secure access system, into the main entrance front door.
- The external outdoor play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised.
- The fire doors in the playroom were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.
- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance were kept for all of the children, attending the pre-school.
- The playroom temperature was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the temperatures were maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition for children.

- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any hazard or potential risk to the pre-school child.

Infection Control:

- Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels.
- During the inspection, the children were assisted and encouraged to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue, and after playing outdoors.
- The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The playroom was observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels.
- The service had cleaning records for the materials, equipment, and furnishings.

Safe Sleep:

- A rest and quiet area was provided in the playroom to facilitate a child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose. On the day of inspection some children looked at books and relaxed in the cosy corner for short period of time.

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 children's arrival and departure times were recorded on a daily basis. The attendance records were reviewed by the inspector on the service's hard back record book.

(3)(a)(b) A written record was available at the service entrance for persons not referred to in particulars (i) to (iv) to record their details and reason for visiting the service.

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 service provided evidence that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service. One staff member had current training in first aid for children and one staff member had basic first aid training.

(2)(a) There was a first aid box with content items within date, safely stored, easily accessible and stored in a conspicuous position in the playroom.

(b) The service demonstrated that a first aid box was fully equipped in the playroom and available to the children attending 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) A written record was available of the monthly fire drills completed in the service. The last fire drill was dated 12/04/2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type, and maintenance of firefighting equipment with the last service dated 08/2023
A record was maintained of the smoke and fire detection system in the premises with the last annual service dated 1/02/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the service on the notice board in the playroom.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had insurance for a sessional service with a max of 22 preschool children with an expiry date of 27/03/2025.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)&(3) The main playroom.

The following measurements apply.

Room Name	Square Metres	Service Type	Service age range of pre-school children in the room	Schedule 6 Age Range	Clear Floor Space	Adult Child Ratios	Maximum number of children for age range
The playroom	41.21 square meters	sessional	3-6 yrs.	2 yrs 8 months to 6 yrs.	1.818 square metres	1: 11	22