

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020CC006		
Name of Service:	Darrara Preschool		
Address of Service:	Cruary, Clonakilty, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P85 VX62		
Name of Registered Provider:	Gráinne Campbell		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	10/06/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM n/a
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78		
Inspection undertaken by:	M. O Reilly		
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		

Description of service

Darrara Preschool is a privately owned early years sessional service that first opened in 2020. It is registered to accommodate a maximum of 22 children aged from 2 to 6 years and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Daily opening hours are from 9:00 to 12:00 hours each day Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a room located at one end of the local national school building. The service has its own entrance gate to the outdoor play area that leads to the main entrance hall door, playroom, toilet facilities for children and adults in the service. There is a spacious outdoor play area to the front and side of the service. There is a set down parking area to the front of the national school building to allow for the safe arrival and departure of the children with their families

Staffing

The staff included the person in charge, a deputy and a relief childcare worker. The registered provider is not on site. The staff who work directly with the early years children all hold a recognised qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education. On the morning of the inspection, there were two adults working directly with 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.

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) There was a named person in charge and a deputy available to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises on day of the inspection.

(2)

Documentation was assessed in relation to the requirements of Regulation 9 for 3 staff members and the registered provider. The following records were available for the 4 adults:

(a) Of the required 8 references, 6 references were from previous employers with the required records of validation on file.

(b) Of the remaining references, 2 references were from another source other than a previous employer with records of the required validation on file.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of the 4 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Processed police clearance was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

There was evidence that the 3 staff members and the registered provider had attained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for 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)
The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children on day of the inspection.

(3)
During the period of inspection, the ratio of staff to children was maintained as per the regulations and an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

There were 12 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 6 years present in the sessional service with 2 adults in attendance. The adult child ratio was correct.

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)(a) to (i)

A sample of 10 of the children's registration forms were reviewed and all were found to contain all of the elements of information as required by Regulation 15 (1) (a) to (i) inclusive.

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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis was available and maintained in the service.
 - (i) A weekly staff roster was maintained in the service. The staff roster indicated the names of the staff, the arrival and departure times each day.
 - (k) The service had records detailing any accidents or incidents that had occurred in the service. A sample of the accident and incident records reviewed; each had been counter signed by the child's parent to evidence that the information had been relayed. The last recorded accident /incident in the service was dated the 20th November 2023.

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

- The service promoted healthy eating and the food provided by the parents and guardians for the mid-morning snack was observed to be healthy and nutritious.
- The children had easy access to their water bottles which were stored on a shelf at child height and allowed the children to help themselves to a drink when they felt thirsty.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were promptly and sensitively attended to. The independent use of the toilet by the children was encouraged and supported as appropriate by the adults. A staff member was observed supervising and assisting where required each of the children when hand washing and hand drying, and the children were supported and encouraged prior to eating, post toileting, messy play and outdoor play.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were calm and relaxed whilst facilitating play opportunities and carrying out caring duties. Only low tones were used, and good eye contact was observed with the children during one-to-one engagement.
- The staff members were observed to work well together and the children were familiar with the routine.
- Staff helped children to recognise and understand sharing and waiting their turn and working together as a group as seen on day of inspection when children were involved in various activities including arts and crafts and a sticker display activity were taking place at different tables in the room. The children were observed waiting their turn, sharing the experience in relation to tabletop group activities for example the children were each given an egg-shaped flat stone to paint. The activity fostered the children's fine motor skills and discussed the various colours they would paint their flat stone. Confidence in language development was observed through discussion about Father's Day and what words the children wanted to write on their Father's Day card. Storybook time further encouraged language development as observed

on day of inspection. Staff were observed to interact in a caring manner with the children building their confidence and communication skills within the setting.

- The mid-morning meal was observed to be a social occasion, as the children chatted freely in a relaxed environment. The staff sat with the children whilst they ate and were offered appropriate assistance by the adults, for example, the children were given plates and cutlery as required and were observed opening lunch boxes, cartons as required.
- During observed tabletop activities, the children were supported and encouraged by the staff, who acknowledged their efforts and achievements.

Physical and Material Environment

- The premise was found to be clean, bright, and well maintained and the openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.
- The playroom was furnished with an adequate number of tables and child sized chairs, and fixed open shelving displaying the wide range of play materials and equipment in an accessible way to the children.
- The spacious playroom afforded children the ability to move freely, as they participated in various activities, such as art and crafts, imaginary play and tabletop activities.
- The room was laid out in a thematic style to encourage and entice the children's interest to play, socialise and explore.
- The children's need for rest, relaxation and comfort was met as the care room was provided with a tipi tent that was furnished with soft matting and cushions as the rest area. The children were able to access this rest area as they chose for play or quiet time.
- The layout of the room promoted the independent access to all the materials to foster children's autonomy and freedom of choice.
- There were multiple tabletop activities to encourage fine motor skill play such as, jigsaws, shape sorters and small construction items. Wall displays included the children's art works, pictures of the children and their families on the family wall.
- There was a designated outdoor play area located beside the school. The area was furnished with a hard surface for ride on toys. There was a sand and earth area to allow the children to dig and fill buckets and trucks companionably. There were sand and earth tables and accompanying play utensils for the children's sensory enjoyment. Gross motor play was observed such as running, jumping, push and ride on toys on day of inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The children’s parents and guardians provided all food items, and the children had their own water bottle.
- Healthy, nutritious lunches were observed being eaten at the mid-morning snack such as sandwiches, rice cakes, rolls, yogurts, a selection of fruits and chopped and diced vegetables.
- Perishable food items in the children’s lunches were stored in the service fridge located in the playroom.

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:

- On the inspector’s arrival at the service, the main entrance door was found to have been secured and was maintained secure when not in use.
- There were no cleaning agents accessible to the child.
- All low presses under the wash hand basin in the care room were fitted with safety locks.
- The first aid box was appropriately stored and inaccessible to children.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes within the children’s reach in the playroom in operation.
- The outdoor play area was adequately secured with high metal fences and locked gates.
- All radiators were provided with protective covers.
- All light fittings were provided with protective covers.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing by the children was observed before mid-morning snack, after toileting, messy play and outdoor play. Liquid soap and disposable paper towels were in place.
- A fridge was available for the storage of the children’s perishable food.

- Tables were observed to be sanitised before snack time.
- A supply of crockery was available to the children during their mid-morning snack break.
- Pedal operated bins were in place for the disposal of paper towels.
- The premises was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. The openable windows allowed for natural light and ventilation.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- There was no thermostatically controlled hot water in the two wash hand basins in the children's toilet facilities, adult toilet facility and in the wash hand basin in the playroom. This would impede effective hand washing increasing the risk of cross infection.

Corrective and Preventative Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Infection Control:

- In the corrective and preventative response received, the registered provider has stated that the service has liaised with the primary school principal, to ensure, there will be thermostatically controlled hot water from the wash hand basins in the service during the hours of operation. The primary school have the only access to the thermostat but have ensured the staff of the preschool service, that the service will have thermostatically controlled hot water at all times during the hours of operation.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

- The statement from the registered provider is accepted as evidence.

Summary Comment

- Correspondence forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate was examined and deemed to meet the requirement of Regulation 23, Infection Control, of the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.

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 registered provider did ensure that there were staff available at all times with appropriate first aid responder (FAR) training. The FAR certification on file indicated that one staff held current up to date training.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was safely stored out of children's reach in the service. The first aid box was stored in an easily accessible position on the premises

(b) The fully equipped first aid box was available at all times to adults if in the event that a child may require treatment.

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 record of monthly fire drills carried out was available and indicated that the last fire drill took place on the 14 May 2025.

(b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced on 20 November 24 and the emergency fire alarm system was last tested and serviced on the 8 March 2025.

(4)
The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An up-to-date insurance certificate was available to indicate that up to 22 children were insured to attend the service. The expiry date was 27 March 2026. The records detailed the category of service covered which was sessional, the name and address of the premises and details regarding public liability cover, fire, theft, buildings, and outings cover.