

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020TY001
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Name of Service:	Scoláirí Óga Preschool & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Kilbarron National School, Kilbarron, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E45 AW72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle McGrath
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	8	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	North Tipperary Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co Tipperary, E45A099
Inspection undertaken by:	L McGeeney
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

This sessional and part-time service was established in 2020 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. A registered school age care service is also provided. This is a sister service to Scoláirí Óga Pre-School, Ballycommon.

The early years service operates between 9am and 2pm, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year, in line with the school calendar. This includes a daily three-hour session, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children, from 9am – 12pm.

The service is operated from a room in the national school in the village of Kilbarron in north Tipperary. The children have access to their room, a sanitary accommodation area used exclusively by children attending the service and use of the school grounds for outdoor play.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service but visits the service daily, is available to call on when required and was present for the closing meeting of the inspection. The pre-school leader is the person in charge on a daily basis. There are two staff employed in the service to work 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(4), 11(1)(2)(4)(8), 15(1)(3), 16(1)(3), 19(1)(b), 23, 24(1), 25(1)(2) and 28.

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 registered provider, 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 pre-school leader was the person in charge on the day of inspection. The registered provider was the designated deputy person in charge and could be called on in the event of the pre-school leader being absent due to planned or unplanned leave.

(b) The person in charge was present in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider was present in the service at the end of the inspection. There was a designated person in charge present in the service while it was in operation.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that of the three staff employed in the service, one staff member had been employed since the previous inspection in April 2023. All three staff files were reviewed as part of the inspection process.

(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for all members of staff working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was not required by any of the staff members as they had not lived outside of the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Staff employed to work with the pre-school children held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 6 or 8 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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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 two staff working directly with eight children aged between 2 and 5 years old on the morning of the inspection. There was one member of staff working directly with six children aged between 3 and 5 years old from 12pm. A second adult was available on the premises in the afternoon to call on if required.

(2) The adult to child ratio was maintained within the required ratios throughout the day.

(4) The adult to child ratio for the morning session was 1:4 which was greater than the minimum requirement of 1:11. The adult to child ratio for the afternoon, between 12pm and 2pm was 1:6, which was greater than the minimum requirement of 1:8.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times while the service was in operation.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The registration form of each child attending the service was reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registration forms contained the information required as detailed under parts (a) – (i) of this regulation.

(3)(c) The registration forms were available in the service for inspection by an authorised person.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The records required to be kept in writing in relation to the service as detailed under parts (a) – (k) of this regulation were available on the premises.

(3) The records were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children:

The staff worked with the children, supported their play and exploration and followed their lead when joining in with imaginative play. On the morning of the inspection staff were customers in the shop, restaurant and café.

Each child got to choose which piece of outdoor play equipment they brought outside when going out for outdoor play time. There was a large selection of buggies, ride-on toys, balls, push toys, outdoor games and chalk stored at the end of the school corridor near the exit door for the children to choose from. On the day of inspection dolls and buggies and a balance bike were chosen. The pre-school leader said that once a week the children come outside without toys, which was when she noticed them using their imaginations to make up games and also engaging with their friends and forming bonds with them.

The daily routine was well planned to create a natural flow to the morning. For example, when the children came in from outdoor play, they washed their hands before returning to their room then got their bags and sat down to eat their lunch.

The staff supported the children to become independent with self-care skills, giving instruction or using aids when necessary. For example, step-up stools were available in the sanitary accommodation area for use by the smaller children to assist them to get to the right height to wash their hands. Other skills included putting on outdoor clothing, hanging up their coats and bags on their individual hooks in the corridor, using the toilet, opening and closing their bags and lunch boxes, tidying up after themselves and caring for their belongings.

The language spoken in the service was English plus the children were introduced to the Irish language through songs, rhymes, colours and numbers.

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 service was kept secured. There was a thumb turn lock on the inside of the door into the pre-school room which was secured when all of the children had arrived. Parents and visitors could access the school building through a door at the side of the school near the pre-school room, which was only used by those accessing the pre-school.

There were gates at the front of the school that were kept closed during the day and checked before the children went out to play to ensure they could not gain unsupervised access to the roadway.

There was soft fall matting under the areas of rock-climbing wall and under the rock-climbing hill and tunnel.

The children entered and exited the premises along a gently sloping concrete ramp. Steps were available for use by the staff or other adults.

Warm water for hand washing was heated by electric water heaters and thermostatically controlled not to exceed 43°C. On the day of inspection the hot water was 35°C.

Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children.

Infection control:

The service had an infection prevention and control policy, a hand washing policy and a cleaning schedule. Staff were observed practicing 'clean as you go' of floors, sinks and surfaces. The premises, toys and equipment were clean and well maintained.

There was a laundering schedule for soft furnishings such as the cover on the sofa, soft toys and dress up clothes.

Fire safety:

The fire escape routes were kept clear of obstruction.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Staff were responsible for recording the children's daily attendance in the weekly attendance register. The arrival and departure times of the children were recorded.

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 two staff who worked in the service on a daily basis, held current certification as first aid responders (FAR).

(2)(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available in the service.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child attending the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service held current insurance cover for part-time daycare and afterschool for up to 20 children at any one time valid until 27 March 2026.