

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021TY002
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	High Hopes Preschool
-------------------------	----------------------

Address of Service:	Donaskeagh Community Hall, Donaskeigh Village, Tipperary, Co Tipperary
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	E34 AK24
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara O'Farrell
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

Date of Inspection:	27/03/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
---	--

Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
----------------------------------	---------------------

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

This part-time service was established in 2021 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service is located in the community hall in the village of Donaskeigh in Co Tipperary. The early years service operates from 9am to 2pm, Monday to Friday. This includes a daily three-hour sessional service operated between 9am and 12pm. The premises was a detached, single storey heritage building located across the road from the national school. The service consisted of a large room with high ceilings, sanitary accommodation areas, outdoor play area and included access to the kitchen at the back of the stage.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were three staff working in the service. The registered provider is the designated person in charge and works directly with the children. All staff employed held qualifications at a level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 20 Facilities for rest and play,
Regulation 22 Food and drink,
Regulation 25 First aid,
Regulation 26 Fire safety and
Regulation 28 Insurance.

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, 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,

(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 is the person in charge and oversees the operation of the childcare facility. One deputy was identified.

(b) The person in charge was present when the unannounced inspection commenced and facilitated the inspection process.

(2)(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 each staff member 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) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working directly with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at the minimum level 5 and above 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.

Compliance Information

(1) There were adequate staffing levels to respond to the children’s needs on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection were above the minimum regulatory requirements. There were 3 staff working with 19 children.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service consisted of one large playroom. The service had play resources available in the room suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service. Materials were accessible to the children on low level shelving. There was clear interest areas developed within the room such as the kitchen area, dolls and construction area. All areas were well-resourced with equipment and materials such as dress up clothes and magnetic blocks. Additional craft resources were available to the children also. There were child sized tables and chairs for tabletop activities such as puzzles and eating at snack time. At one end of the room were books available to the children. The children's arts and crafts decorated the walls.

(b) A rest area where children could sit and read or take a break was also available in the service.

(2)(a) The outdoor areas were fully enclosed to the rear of the service. The children had a variety of toys and equipment outside including ride on toys and a mud kitchen. The children were observed playing outside and it was reported by staff that the children get out to play daily.

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 service had a healthy eating policy. All foods eaten by the children were supplied by their parents. Children brought their own drink bottles which were stored on shelves in their room, where they could be accessed by the children when they wanted them. Bottles were refilled with water as required. Staff sat with the children during snack time to supervise them, encourage conversation and to help if needed, for example with opening lunch boxes. Foods eaten at snack time on morning of the inspection included: crackers, yogurts, sandwiches, soda bread, cheese and fruit.

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) There were staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children attending the 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on 23 March 2025.

(b) There was a written record of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. A fire register was maintained for these records and all records associated with fire safety in the service. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarm system was serviced on 16 September 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in the room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.