

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022LK004
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Name of Service:	Sugradh Knocklong
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Address of Service:	Knocklong National School, Knocklong, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V35 A627
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michael O'Sullivan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	0
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years inspectorate, Tusla, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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).

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Description of service

Sugradh Knocklong is a registered sessional service located 1km outside the village of Knocklong in Co. Limerick. Operational hours are Monday to Friday 9.20hrs to 12.20hrs for 38 weeks of the year with a maximum of 22 children attending. The service operates from a room within the national school. There is one playroom indoors and the service has sole access to a large outdoor play area located at the side of the service. It has sanitary facilities for both adults and the preschool children.

Staffing

Four staff are employed in the service.

The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 -

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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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

(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.*

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(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 person in charge was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the person in charge was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or their deputy were always available on the premises.

(c) There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and roles and responsibilities of each employee.

(2) The file of 1 new staff members who started in the service in 2025 was viewed and the Garda vetting of all other staff members were reviewed.

(a) There were 1 written and validated reference from previous employer on file.

(b) There was 1 written and validated reference from sources other than a previous employer on file.

(c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for the 4 staff members. The Garda vetting for the staff members was dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting, published by the inspectorate in September 2023 and effective from 1st of January 2024.

(d) Police vetting was not available as no staff had resided outside of Ireland for longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Three of the staff members working directly with the preschool children have childcare qualifications.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The policies, and procedures for the service were updated in 2025 and were available in the service, accessible to all the staff to view and refer to as required.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of qualified staff members working directly with the preschool children attending the service.

On the day there were 2 staff members including the person in charge working directly with 13 preschool children in the service for sessional care.

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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:

A healthy eating policy was maintained within the service, and nutritious food options were provided daily during snack time. Children regularly assisted staff with the preparation and service of food for their break. The foods observed includes a wide variety of choices including rolls, sandwiches, fruits, yogurts, crackers, and vegetables. All perishable items were stored in a refrigerator each morning until needed for mealtime.

The children were accompanied to toilet facilities as they were located a distance away from the preschool room. Handwashing stations were equipped with hot water, liquid soap, and paper towels. Additionally, a washbasin was available directly within the preschool room for convenience. Spare clothing was kept on hand for all children, and protective gear was provided for use during messy play or outdoor activities in wet weather.

Tissues and wipes remained within reach of the children at all times, and waste was managed appropriately using lidded bins. A relaxation area was established featuring a large couch for children who required rest. Furthermore, children spent time outdoors daily in an enclosed garden area situated immediately adjacent to the preschool room.

Relationships and interactions around children:

The service supports children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with the staff members.

There was a key person assigned to each child. The staff knew each child individually by name, their likes, dislikes and interest. When talking to the children they got down to their level and were observed making eye contact. They were observed listening to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, their feelings and thoughts and their experiences both verbally and non-verbally by reading the children's cues, gestures and body language.

The staff were observed to respond to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The staff were positive in their communication with the children, using soft tones of voice and listening to the children in a caring and positive way. When a child got upset or tired they were observed offering comfort and nurture.

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There were many opportunities for small and large group activities and play, to support children working together on different tasks, eating and playing together and to recognise and accept their differences and similarities.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Non-Compliance Information

The couch in the playroom was worn and in a poor condition, making the cleaning difficult due to its poor state of repair.

The person in charge said that it will be replaced at the end of the term.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action: The registered provider has stated in the corrective and preventive document that :

A temporary couch which can be easily cleaned is in place until its replaced before new term starts in September 2026.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of the couch attached.

Summary Comment

The action taken were adequate to meet the regulatory requirements of Regulation 21.