

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022MH001			
Name of Service:	The Grange Preschool & Afterschool Club			
Address of Service:	Mornington Court, Tower Road, Mornington, Co. Meath			
Eircode:	A92 X611			
Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine McKearney, Niamh Mongey			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date of Inspection:	04/09/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	20
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Hampton Court, Cootehill Road, Drumalee, Co Cavan. H12 YY84			
Inspection undertaken by:	S Mc Kenna			
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			

Description of service

The Grange Preschool & Afterschool Club is one of three privately-owned Early Years' services operated by the registered providers, with both services located in the East Meath area. This Full Day Care service caters for a maximum of 32 pre-school children aged 2 to 6 years. The service operates from 7.30am to 6.00pm each weekday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks each year. The service operates within a purpose-built single storey premises in a residential housing estate. There are 2 care rooms on the premises, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2. Ancillary accommodation includes sanitary facilities, a kitchen, an office, staff room, laundry area and store rooms. A spacious fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises. Car parking spaces are provided to the front of the premises. The service is registered to provide care for School Aged children.

Staffing

There are 12 staff employed within the service, to include two registered providers, one manager, a cook, 2 school aged staff and 6 childcare staff, two of whom are employed under the Access and inclusion Model (AIM)

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 and safety. 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 registered provider who was on site, 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.

(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 service had a designated person in charge, who is the service manager a named person to deputise in their absence.

(b) Following discussion with the registered provider and manager and review of the staff roster, it was confirmed that when the preschool service was in operation the designated person in charge or the named person in charge were on the premises.

(c) A management structure was in place, which was clearly identifiable through review of the staff roster and discussion with the staff team.

(2) The files for 12 staff were reviewed.

(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for 12 adults.

A total of 20 written and validated references from a previous employer were on file.

A total of 4 written and validated references from a reputable source were on file.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 12 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all employed staff.

(d) A review of the employment history for 12 staff, demonstrated that one adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting for the one staff was available on file.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 10 staff employed to work directly with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent. A qualification for the cook and a school age staff member was not 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.

(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.

(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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection. The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at maximum attendance.

Two adults cared for 10 children aged 2 years 8 months to 3 years 9 months in Preschool 2, of whom 4 attended on a sessional basis and 6 attended on part time or full day care basis.

Four adults cared for 18 children aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years 7 months in Preschool 1, of whom 4 attended on a sessional basis and 14 attended on part time or full day care basis.

In addition to the above, the service manager covered in care rooms where required, and one of the register providers who was present upon the inspectors arrival, remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.

(8) A review of the staff roster demonstrated that the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

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
- (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

Basic Needs

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service. The service provides breakfast, morning snack, dinner and an afternoon snack to the children in attendance. The children while attending the ECCE scheme have an option to take in their own lunches. The children's snacks taken in from home contained a variety of sandwiches, fruits, meats and yogurts. The children's drinks were available to them at all times in the care rooms. A hot meal of beef bolognese and cheesy potatoes was served to the children at 12:40pm. Snack and

meal times were observed to be unrushed, and the staff were observed to sit with and support children at these times where needed.

- Older children were observed to use the toilet independently. The children's toilets are located off the hallway outside the care rooms, and staff were observed to accompany the children at all times when they needed to use this area. Children who were not yet toilet trained had their nappies changed in line with their routine.
- Care was given to children appearances. Children were observed to have their faces cleaned after dinner time, clothing was changed when it became wet or soiled, and appropriate clothing was worn by children in the outdoors to include coats, wellington boots and wet suits for those who played in the wet and muddy areas. Both care rooms experienced a change of environment and spent time outdoors on the day of inspection.
- Rest areas were provided in each care room where children could rest and relax during their day. Preschool 2 had a sofa, soft mats and cushions and Preschool 1 had a soft mat, cushions and bean bags.

Supporting Relationships

- The atmosphere upon the inspectors arrival in the service was warm and inviting. Positive and supportive interactions were observed between the staff and children. The children were observed to be engaged in play and activities within their care rooms. Staff remained close by the children facilitating and enhancing play opportunities such as adding additional materials and resources to water play and painting activities.
- The new preschool year had recently begun, and strong supportive relationships were observed between the staff and children. The children appeared familiar with the staff who cared for them, and the staff demonstrated a high awareness of each child's likes and dislikes. The children were observed to call on staff for support if needed and were observed to confidently explore their indoor and outdoor learning environments.
- The staff were observed to demonstrate sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for children and their families, through respecting parental wishes while also acknowledging the children's individual preferences and choice. The staff were observed to speak with the children about their home life, which demonstrates strong relationships between the children, their parents/carers and the staff team.
- Communication with parents/carers is in person upon arrival and collection and also the use of a digital application. Parents/carers were observed to come into the care rooms on the day of inspection at arrival and collection times, where they were observed to talk to the staff about the child's day.

- The staff were observed to work well together, communicating clearly regarding snack and meal times, and where changes occurred in the children's collection times. Transitions were observed to be smooth throughout the day, and staff made other staff aware when children and staff moved to different areas such as going to the toilet or returning inside during outdoor play time.

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

The registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as:

General Safety:

- The premises were appropriately secured to prevent a child from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A door bell system is used which notifies staff of parents/carers presence, staff then permit access to the building, where the parents/carers collect the children directly from their care rooms.
- A visitor log is maintained, and the inspector was requested to sign in and out upon arrival and departure.
- The outdoor area was secured by high level walls and locked gates. The area was observed to be free from hazards on the day on inspection.
- The toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be maintained in good condition.
- Risk assessments were available for review and completed up to date.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children.
- Storage areas when not in use remained locked.
- Blinds cords were secured out of reach.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- Fire exits were observed to remain clear from obstruction.
- The children were observed to be appropriately supervised by staff during the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Warm thermostatically controlled running water, liquid soap, individual use paper towels and foot operated bins were provided for handwashing purposes. The children were observed to wash their hands after using the toilet, when coming in from outdoors, before eating and following messy activities.
- Sanitary areas were ventilated through means of mechanical ventilation.
- Tables were observed to be cleaned before and after snack and meal times.
- Children’s snacks from home which contained perishable food items are stored in the fridge in the kitchen.
- Cleaning schedules were available for review and completed up to date.
- Waste bins were stored securely and were inaccessible to children.

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) Following review of staff files and the staff roster, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times, this was evidenced by 5 in date FAR training certificates on file.

(2) (a) & (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available on the premises and were stored in accessible and conspicuous locations and available at all times.

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 the fire drills that take place was available. The most recent fire drill was recorded on 18 August 2025.
- (b) The annual maintenance certificate for the fire extinguishers was dated 24 May 2025, and the smoke alarms was dated 20 August 2025.
- (4) The fire evacuation procedures were displayed on walls throughout the service, which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for up to 32 pre-school children attending the service on a Full Day Care basis. The policy showed that the service had insurance in place from 28 March 2025 to 27 March 2026.