

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025LS001		
Name of Service:	Na Blatha Beaga		
Address of Service:	Shanahoe Community Centre, Shanahoe, Co. Laois		
Eircode:	R32 E3FR		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah O'Dea		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	13/10/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, Primary Care Centre, Church Avenue, Tullamore, Co. Offaly.		
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy		
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

Established in 2025 the service is registered as a sessional service to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service is located in a purposely adapted single storey community building. One pre-school room and a kitchenette are currently in use. An outdoor play area is attached at the side of the service. The service is in a rural setting in the centre of the village of Shanahoe, County Laois.

Staffing

There are three staff employed in the service. The registered provider and two childcare practitioners were present on the day of inspection.

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 an initial announced inspection 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 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 and a deputy were available in the service.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Three files including the file of the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available in respect of the three files reviewed from a past employer or from a source other than a past employer.

(c)

The service is in operation since August 2025 and a Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the three files reviewed.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff members had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 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.

(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 minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.

(3)

There were ten children attending the service supervised directly by three adults.

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)

In a review of ten child records for the children present in the service the details relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f) (g)(h) and (i) were in place.

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;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development. Children were encouraged to be independent in caring for their belongings and putting on their coats. All children were observed to enjoy free play, choosing their own activity to participate in and playing in the outdoor play area supervised by staff.

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children were content with their carers and staff were familiar with each child and their personality. Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Children were supervised to use the toilet independently and regular hand washing was observed.

The routines were child led with the staff following the individual verbal and non-verbal cues of the child. The adults were observed to interact in a kind and caring manner with the children.

The children were supported in accordance with their preference on an individual level and as part of the group. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during all activities. Seamless transitions were noted as the children were given a lead in time to change from one activity to another.

A range of developmentally appropriate experiences were available for the children. Areas of interest were noted in the room and included a home area, construction area, arts and crafts, dress up, sensory play and small world items.

The service worked in partnership with parents. Individual, group learning and associated photographs and narratives relating to the children’s activities are captured digitally. Parents have access to a mobile phone-based application to receive updates and information in real time regarding the daily life of their child in the service. At collection time parents were provided with a verbal handover on the activities and progress of each child throughout the morning.

(2)
Positive behaviour strategies were observed during the inspection. Staff used a calm approach using soft language tones, giving positive praise and encouragement to the children. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

(3)
The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions, and the adults demonstrated a good knowledge of the children’s individual preferences and capabilities. The adults responded to children’s individual needs promptly and provided regular praise and encouragement throughout the session.

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.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

1)(a)

Suitable and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Soft furnishings provided appropriate rest facilities for any child who wished to avail of rest and relaxation.

(4)

A separate outdoor play area was available to the side of the service. An absorbent tile surface area was in place. A high-level wire fence secured the perimeter of the outdoor area. The area was equipped with a covered sand tray, a wooden play kitchen, a slide and a variety of bikes and trikes.

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 entry to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable and cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. There was an adequate supply of paper hand towel and liquid soap in the sanitary accommodation. Warm water was noted at the wash hand basins. Hand washing was facilitated before snack time and after using the toilet. The pre-school room and the sanitary accommodation were ventilated by means of openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

No medicine was administered during the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed. An assembly point was located to the front of the premises.

Outing:

A risk assessment and associated checklists were in place in respect of outings conducted from the service.

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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)
A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation of the service.

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)
Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.
- (2)(a)
A fully equipped first aid box was readily available in the service.
- (b)
A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school 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 firefighting 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 written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 25 September 2025.
- (b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in November 2024. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in June 2025.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were supervised by the three adults present. An adult accompanied children to use the toilet and to wash their hands after using the toilet, on return from outdoor play and after a painting activity. A staff member handed each individual child to the parent or nominated adult at the collection time at the end of the morning session.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider provided all requested records and information during the inspection.