

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE046
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Name of Service:	Realta Draiochta Pre-School (Ennis National Preschool)
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Address of Service:	Ennis National School, Kilrush Road, Ennis, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V95 DE44
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Name of Registered Provider:	Katherine Quinn, Martina O'Loughlin
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	10
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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

This part time/sessional service is a privately run service and is provided from two classrooms in Ennis National School. It caters for up to a maximum of 66 pre-school children on part time/sessional basis at any one time, between 2 and 6 years of age. The service is open Monday-Fridays 08:30 – 13:30 hours.

A school aged service is provided in the afternoon.

Staffing

The joint registered providers operated the part time service/sessional assisted by six adults who were present on the day when the inspection was carried out.

All adults employed to work directly with children held an appropriate qualification in childcare

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 Management and recruitment

(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (3)(4)

Regulation 11 (1) and (2) - Staffing levels

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Regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 25 First Aid (1)(a), (b)

Regulation 29 - Premises

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.

Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Immediate Action Notice IAN1842	22/05/2026	Evidence of Police vetting for 1 staff member from 1 of the 2 countries was not available on file. This staff member was present on the day and had access to the preschool children.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following service of the Notice and the provider submitted a written response with detailed corrective and preventative actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate. The Police vetting is now in place.	

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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.
- (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 registered providers were present on the day of the inspection. There was a person available who was able to deputise if required.
- (b) During the period of the inspection, the registered providers were present, and the staff roster indicated that a person in charge was always available at the service.
- (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 files of the 8 staff members were reviewed.

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- (a) There were 12 written and validated references on file, submitted by staff members from their previous employers.
- (b) There were 4 references on file from sources other than past employers for the staff members.
- (c) Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for all the staff members employed to work in the service. The Garda vetting for the 8 staff members were dated within the last three years as per the regulatory notice, EYI-RN12.3 renewal of garda vetting.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 3 staff members who had resided outside of jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The staff members working with the preschool children had the appropriate childcare qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) See statutory Notice section in relation to Immediate Action Notice IAN 1842.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried for 1 staff member prior to being employed, assigned and allowed access / contact with preschool children attending the pre-school service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (d) A copy of the police vetting and the translation for the 1 staff member who had resided in 1 of the 2 countries was submitted to the Early years inspectorate and is now on file in the service.
- (3) To prevent future administrative errors the service has implemented a dual -audit system. A monthly checklist has been introduced for all staff files. For any staff member requiring multinational checks a digital backup folder has been created on the secure school drive to ensure copies are instantly accessible in the event that a physical document is misplaced. The management team will review this checklist on the 1st of every month.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the Police vetting was submitted to the Early Years inspectorate.

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Summary Comment

2(d) The police vetting for the staff member is now on file in the service.

This meets the regulatory requirements of Regulation 9(2)(d).

(3) This now meet the regulatory requirements of point (3).

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 following policies were viewed and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement of Regulation 10.

- Policy on infection control.
- Policy on Healthy Eating.

The policies were last updated in August 2024.

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) On the day of inspection there were 6 adults working with 31 pre-school children in the morning and 4 adults working with 10 pre-school children until 13:00pm.

The adult/child ratio in the service was correct. The registered providers were available on site.

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(2) The written staff roster showed that the registered providers ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

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

(1)(a) The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment having regard to the age and developmental stage of the children.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The staff members working directly with the children demonstrated a knowledge of the children's preferences and capabilities and a key person approach was observed in operation in each care room. The rooms accommodated visual routine displays demonstrating photographic illustrations to support and include all children in the programme of care and children appeared settled, content, and immersed in their self-selected activities.

The staff members worked effectively together to meet the care needs of the children in each room. The children were observed to seek the support of adults when needed and were responded to promptly. The staff were observed to cuddle, comfort and soothe the children. The staff engaged with the children in individual and group-based activities and followed the children's lead in the care rooms. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions observed between the staff and children. The children were encouraged to be independent with caring for their belongings, feeding, using the toilet and during play-based activities and this was praised by the adults.

Parents were communicated with in an informal manner during the children's arrival and departure to and from the service. Learning journals captured the children's activities and artwork, and parents are communicated with through the service's application system.

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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) Three staff members held current certification in First Aid Response (FAR) and were available at all times while the service was in operation.

(2)(a) There were suitably equipped first aid boxes safely stored and easily accessible in each room of the service.

(b) The first aid boxes were available if required for a child.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

(a) of sound and stable structure,

(b) safe and secure,

(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

(a) The premises was of sound and stable structure and there were no visible defects.

(b) The entrance and exit doors were secure to prevent children from exiting and to prevent unauthorised access. The front of the premises was gated and secure with a key pad system. The outdoor areas were fenced and walled.

(c) Heating, ventilation and lighting were adequate in each area of the service.

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(d) Cleaning schedules were in place for each room and sanitary areas and the service plans to undertake a deep cleaning of all areas within the service when it closes at the end of June for the summer.

(e) Suitable sanitary facilities were available for both staff and children.

All waste was managed appropriately.

Hygienic hand washing and drying facilities were available in each of the sanitary areas used by the preschool children.