

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY039
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Name of Service:	Durrow Pre-School No 2
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Address of Service:	Ballybought, Durrow, Tullamore, Co. Offaly
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Eircode:	R35 H5H0
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan O'Brien
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	08/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	42	PM	19
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan, C. O'Connor Hughes.
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Durrow Pre-School No 2 is based in a purpose-built premises in the rural location of Durrow beside the local primary school. It operates a full day care, part-time and sessional service from 8:00am to 18:00hrs. The service caters for children aged between 2 to 6 years and is registered for a maximum number of 66 pre-school children, at any one time. There are three playrooms, and a kitchen. The outdoor play area is located at the rear of the premises. On-site parking and set down facilities are available.

The service is registered to provide school age care.

Staffing

Thirteen adults are employed in the service. On the day of the inspection, eleven adults including the registered provider and the cook were present. Of the eleven adults present, six core staff members, two students on placement were working directly with the preschool children. An adult employed to provide school age care was also present and provided support to support to the purple room. The registered provider works in the service daily.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

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- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4), (7)(a), (b), (c) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 16(1)(a), (i), (k) – Record in relation to pre-school service.
- Regulation 19(1), (a) – Health, Welfare and Development of Child.
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 25(1), (2)(a), (b) – First Aid.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.

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.

Additional Information

A written referral was made to an external quality development service on the 8 June 2026.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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*

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5.*
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*
- (c) these Regulations.*

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Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)(b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required, both remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that two adults had been employed since the previous inspection. The files of two staff were reviewed.
- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of two adults.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for two adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Not applicable, as no adult had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to the two adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Two adults employed to work directly with children attending the service and held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.
- (7)(a), (b), (c) The registered provider provided documentary evidence of team meetings, staff supervision and staff training in relation to care practices and Child Care Act 1991(Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016.

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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) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.
- (2) There were forty-two children attending the service supervised directly by seven adults in the morning.
- There were nineteen children present in the afternoon supervised by four adults.
- (8)(a) The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

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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.

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (k)

The service held information in respect of (a), (k).

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(i) The staff roster did not contain details of the registered provider or the deputy person in charge on a daily basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(i) We have added the deputy person in charge on the roster. All staff to be recorded on weekly roster.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(i) Staff roster.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider had been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 16.

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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

(1)(a)

The children enjoyed the freedom of movement in the outdoor play environment. They also enjoyed story time and various play activities supported by staff.

Children were encouraged to be independent and to feed themselves. Staff assisted children as needed during mealtimes. Children enjoyed the potato, pasta, chicken and carrots with gravy served for the main meal water to drink. Children took their time to enjoy the meal. Children used the toilet independently and washed their hands. Children dressed in appropriate clothing when going outdoors and availed of the sheltered outdoor areas during the heavy rainfall.

A key person system was in operation in the service which helped to promote the emotional security of children attending the service. Good communication was observed between staff and children as the staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Access and inclusion plans were available for children requiring extra support and supervision.

Staff stated a verbal handover is given to parents at collection time. Information and updates are sent to parents using a short messaging system (SMS). The child's learning journal depicting the child's play and work activities are shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. Children development observations were available and reviewed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

1. The registered provider did not ensure that suitable and nutritious food was being provided for each child attending the service as evidenced by the following observations:
 - In Blue and green rooms, two children were observed with a high sugar content snack in their lunch box, for example, foods observed included packet of jelly sweets, crisps, marshmallows, a chocolate brioche roll, cereal bars and chocolate rice cakes.
2. Milk not offered as a drink to the children with their snack or their main meal.

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3. The physical and material environments in the three care rooms required to be reviewed to ensure that these areas are presented and adequately resourced to enable the children to engage in child led imaginative play. There was limited defined areas of interest available to the children in the three care rooms. Materials and resources were stored in containers on shelves. Some shelves were turned in towards the walls which prevented the children access to them. It was observed that activities were adult led rather than enabling the children to be independent to make choices and decisions about their play.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

1. Information on nutritious snack from (Safe food HSE Healthy lunchboxes for preschools) was sent to all parents to inform them and give them examples/recommendations of healthy snack that should be in their child's lunch boxes
2. A new healthy eating policy created, and a healthy preschool eating booklet sent out to all parents. RP will ensure that parents follow the service healthy eating policy.
The updated menu to include milk at meals times. To create menu annually and follow Tusla guidelines.
3. We have applied to a quality improvement organisation to give us more advice on defined areas of interest for the children and to look at activities that will be children led rather than adult led. As we use the rooms for school age care, some units are turned around so the early years children do not have access to. We are looking at ways to see how we can set the room up for both early years and school aged care children.
Contact Early Years Specialist to arrange them to visit our service to guide us on how we operate our room. All staff will follow the recommendation the service receives from the Early Years Specialist.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. No evidence submitted.
2. Menu plan.
3. Email from a quality improvement organisation confirming Early Years Specialist assigned to work with the service.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. The corrective actions outlined once implemented will meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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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 main entrance door to the service was secured and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. The outdoor area in the service was secured. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival.

Staff members in each care room advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were available for review. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. Facilities for nappy changing were available in the service. The staff members supervised the children's handwashing and children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet.

Children's lunches were stored in the fridge on arrival to the service.

Natural ventilation was available in the pre-school rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service. Temperature reducing medication was available if a child presented with a high temperature. Medication was stored safely and inaccessible to children.

Health care plans were in place for children with a defined medical condition attending the service.

Safe Sleep:

Two low-level beds were available for children who required sleep. The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the care of sleeping children in response to questions asked by the inspector.

Fire Safety:

The fire emergency exits were free from obstruction in the premises. A fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area.

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Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service; this was confirmed by the registered provider.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was no daily indoor and outdoor environmental risk assessment completed to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff. It is acknowledged that stand alone risk assessments for identified risks were completed and provided for inspection.

This was a non-compliance following inspection conducted on 29 September 2025. The corrective action submitted by the registered provider following the inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

2. The storage room containing cleaning agents was accessible to children in the purple room which posed a potential risk of harm to a child if they ingested the cleaning agents.
3. The kitchen and the contents within were accessible to children as the kitchen was located adjacent to the purple room.
4. There were no visibility strips in place at the front door in order for children to recognise glass.

Infection Control:

5. Nappy changes were observed on the day of inspection and were not completed in line with best infection control practices. On two occasions, the adult did not wash their hands prior to commencing nappy changing, did not use a single use disposable apron and did not remove the disposable gloves following the bagging up of the soiled nappy. The nappy change area was not sanitised between nappy changes. A step by step nappy change procedure was not displayed in the nappy change area.

This was a non-compliance following inspection conducted on 29 September 2025. The corrective action submitted by the registered provider following the inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

6. The bin used for the disposal of soiled nappies was not a lined, lidded bin that is leak proof, sealable and easy to clean as outlined in the Early Years Regulatory notice use of nappy storage and disposal bins in Early Years Services.
7. The mechanical ventilation unit in the internal nappy change area was not working and consequently the air in this area was not circulated for infection control and ventilation purposes.
8. There was a build-up of debris on the grid of the mechanical ventilation which required to be removed to ensure that the unit could operate effectively for infection control purposes.

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9. Open bins used for the disposal of soiled waste which included used paper hand towels, used food wrappers and yogurt containers were observed in the green and purple rooms. The contents were accessible to the children which was not a suitable infection control practice.
10. There was no hand towel dispenser located at the sink in the purple room. A staff member was observed to use a cloth towel to dry her hands which is unsuitable for infection control purposes.

Fire Safety:

11. Monthly fire drills had not been completed since 29 March 2026. Regular monthly fire drills are required to ensure the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. We are sitting down as staff team to come up with a checklist of possible risks both indoor and outdoor and the lead educator of each room will have the responsibilities of checking and recording. Management will look after and record ventilation, gates open/closing them and all electrical sockets are covered daily. Checklist to be filled in daily by lead educators and Management on indoor and outdoor risks.
2. New signs placed on cleaning storeroom and kitchen room. Daily checks that signs are on the doors.
3. A new latch placed on kitchen up high. Kitchen staff and all other staff using the kitchen informed to check that latch is on when they exit the kitchen.
4. New visible signs erected on the windows at entrance of the service. Daily check by registered provider that visible signs are on all doors and windows.

Infection Control:

5. A step by step visual poster on how to change a nappy purchased and placed in the changing room for all staff to follow. A new nappy changing policy issued to all staff. Registered provider will do spot checks and record them to see if staff are following the correct procedures.
6. New bin purchased. Registered provider to check that a plastic bin is inserted into the bin to prevent spillages.
7. A new vent has been installed.
8. The vent was cleaned after the inspection. Staff to check daily. Cleaning of ventilation system added to clean up checklist.
9. Lidded foot pedal bins purchased for blue and purple room. Registered provider will check regularly to check that they are in working order.

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10. A new hand paper towel unit purchased and erected on wall near sink. Registered provider will check that there are hand paper towel units in each room.

Fire Safety:

11. A new fire drill book has been purchased to record all fire drills completed. The fire drill logbook will be taken outside when we have our monthly fire drills. The outcome of the fire drill will be promptly recorded.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Risk assessment template document.
2. Photograph.
3. Photograph.
4. Photograph.

Infection Control:

5. Nappy changing policy. Photograph of step by step visual aid. Record of nappy change training by one staff member.
6. No evidence submitted.
7. Invoice.
8. No evidence submitted.
9. Photograph.
10. Photograph.

Fire Safety:

11. Invoice.

Summary Comment

The written response, documentary and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider has been reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. The corrective actions outlined once implemented will meet the regulatory requirement. The practices as stated will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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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) One staff member present was trained in first aid response (FAR) and was immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was not available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending the service as evidenced by the following observations:

- There were alcohol wipes instead of antiseptic wipes.
- There was no burn shield.
- The sterile eye wash and bandages had an expiry date of September 2024.
- There were no paramedic shears available.
- There were insufficient bandages in place for the registered numbers of children attending the service. The expiry date on the bandages had expired.

This was a non-compliance following inspection conducted on 29 September 2025. The corrective action submitted by the registered provider following the inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(b) A new first aid box was purchased. Registered provider will check regularly to ensure that box is fully stocked.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photograph of new first aid box

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider had been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25.

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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

Children were supervised in the indoor and outdoor environments and when toileting during the inspection. Parents were observed to collect their children from staff members at the end of the morning session at the main entrance.