

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2022MH001
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Name of Service:	The Grange Preschool & Afterschool Club
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Address of Service:	Mornington Court, Tower Road, Mornington, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 X611
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Name of Registered Provider:	Catherine McKearney, Niamh Mongey
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	13
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham, S Mc Kenna
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

The Grange Preschool & Afterschool Club is one of three privately-owned Early Years' services operated by the two registered providers, with both services located in the East Meath area. This Full Day Care caters for 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, namely Preschool 1 and Preschool 2. Also available are sanitary facilities, a kitchen, an office, staff room, laundry area and storerooms. A spacious fully enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 11 staff employed within the service at present including one manager, a cook, 6 childcare staff and 2 school aged staff. One staff member is on long term statutory leave. The two registered providers do not work on a daily basis in the service but available to staff when required.

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.

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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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, 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*
- (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) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

Two staff files were reviewed. The remainder of the staff files were reviewed at a previous inspection and compliance achieved.

(2)(a) (b) Two written and validated references were on file for both staff members.

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- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for both staff members. 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 the 2 staff, demonstrated that both adults had lived outside the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months. The required police vetting was available on file.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that the adult employed to work directly with children, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications. A qualification for the school age staff member was not required.

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 Accident and Incident policy was reviewed and was found to be comprehensive; it included the requirement for the service to notify Tusla of any incidents as required by the legislation.

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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) 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.

In **Preschool Room 1**: Three adults cared for 15 children aged 3 years 6 months to 5 years, of whom 4 attended on a sessional basis and 8 attended on part time or full day care basis.

In **Preschool Room 2**: Two adults cared for 9 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 4 months, of whom 4 attended on a sessional basis and 5 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 arrived at the service at 10.30am and 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.

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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 of the Children:

Morning snack served on the day consisted of sliced cucumber, carrots, banana and yogurt which was available to all children in attendance. Staff supported the children to be independent while they used the toilet, staff accompanied children to the toilet and provided discreet supervision where required. Staff supported children to care for their personal belongings, by including them in the facilitation of the programme of care and during mealtime. At mealtimes staff sat with the children once all children were served. The trolley for mealtimes was placed between the two rooms at the adjoining door; the hot meal which was served to the children by a staff members was chicken, potato cubes, mixed veg and gravy. The children were treated with positive regard during all interactions observed on the day. The staff responded to the children's cues for assistance in a prompt and sensitive manner. The children were supported as they played individually and part of the group. The weather on the day of inspection was warm, and playing outdoors in the good weather was availed off. The staff were observed to apply suncream to the children before going outside and were also observed to reapply suncream when the children were outdoors for some time. The children were also observed to wear sun hats and their drink cups were available to them during both indoor and outdoor play. Children whose clothes got wet during water play games in the outdoors had their clothes changed when they returned to their care room.

Supporting Relationships Around Children:

The staff were observed to engage in a caring and sensitive manner, and children were spoken to at their level and in soft, gentle tones of voice. The staff team were prompt to respond to any minor disagreements between children over turn-taking and sharing. The staff provided reassurances to any child who became upset or appeared sad and used age-appropriate strategies along with the children to come up with solutions. The children were observed to explore their indoor and outdoor environments confidently and staff remained close by for supports and responded to and provided for children's emerging interests. It was evidenced that staff operated in partnership with parents. Staff greeted each parent or guardian at drop off and collection time and shared information with them about their child's day.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The gate entering the side entrance to the service was secured, and the main door to the service was secured by a buzzer system. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- An indoor and outdoor risk assessment was conducted on a regular basis.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed:

- The hand washing policy was evident in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.
- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- Fridges were available in the care rooms for the refrigeration of perishable items.

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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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises

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

On the day of inspection children were adequately supervised at all times.

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Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

(d) Although risk assessments were completed daily, areas required maintenance or to be repaired as outlined below. It is acknowledged that the service manager had created a “snag list” for the attention of the newly recruited maintenance person.

- Impact covers were fitted to the piers in the outdoor area; one was no longer in place.
- A hot tap in the sanitary area was rusted.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

- The registered providers have replaced the impact cover on the garden wall that was missing. All other impact covers on the wall were checked also and resecured where necessary.
- The tap identified in the report was replaced. To ensure consistency the registered providers also replaced all the other taps in the children’s bathroom.

Preventive Action

- Checks on the impact covers on the wall have been added to the garden checklist. The registered providers have also purchased spares to keep at the service so any damaged or missing items can be replaced immediately.
- To help prevent these issues from occurring in the future the bathroom checklist has been updated to include a check for rust/corrosion in the bathroom areas.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of new taps attached to the email

Photo of impact covers on the wall attached to the email

New bathroom checklist attached

New garden checklist attached

Invoice for impact covers attached

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Summary Comment

The response and actions taken from the registered providers have addressed the non-compliances in Regulation 29.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)& (c) A Complaints Policy was available. Documentation to record any feedback and concerns by the service was available. The registered provider provided written chronological information of complaints received and evidence of the complaints policy adhered too.

(2) (a)(b)A record in writing was available of a complaint received which was dealt with according to the services complaints policy.