

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE037
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Name of Service:	Funscoil Deilfeanna Beaga
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Address of Service:	Church Street, Carrigaholt National School, Carrigaholt, Kilrush, Co. Clare
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Eircode:	V15 A271
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marian Crotty Hedderman
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	03/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E
Inspection undertaken by:	J. Hayes
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
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Description of service

Funscoil Deilfeanna Beaga is a sessional pre-school service located in a classroom in Carraigaholt National School in Co. Clare. It operates from 9.15am to 12.15pm, Monday to Friday. The service is registered to care for a maximum of 22 pre-school children aged from 3 to 6 years attending on a sessional basis.

Staffing

The registered provider of the service was not present on the day of the inspection. The service was operated by the person in charge with the assistance of another adult when the unannounced inspection was carried out.

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.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4)

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

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Regulation 25 - First aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 28- Insurance

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 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.*

(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,*

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(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)

On the day of the inspection, the service had a person in charge and there was a named person available who was able to deputise if required.

(b)

During the period of the inspection, the designated person in charge and the deputy were present on the premises.

(2)

Three files were available in respect of the registered provider and the two adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Four written references from past employers were available in respect of three adults.

(b)

Two written references from a source other than a past employer was available in respect of two adults.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 were available for four adults working in the service. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

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(d)

Police vetting was provided for one adult working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months.

(4)

The adults working in the service held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications from Level 5 to level 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)

During the inspection, an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.

(3)

On the 03 December 2025, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Two adults worked directly with the ten children attending the sessional service.

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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)

Basic Needs of Children:

The children's learning, development, and well-being was supported by the adults working in the service. The programme of care and education was facilitated within the play room and the sensory room provided in the service. The adults interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The adults listened attentively and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. Positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions, and the children were offered praise and encouragement. The adults demonstrated an awareness of the children's personal interests and capabilities.

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and equipment. A soft seating area with a large bean bag was used by the children to rest and relax and take time out from the group activities. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age and level of development. The children and adults sat together during mealtime. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion, and children were provided with an opportunity to have their food at an earlier time if they wished and also provided with additional time if needed to finish eating their food.

Physical and Material Environment:

The indoor and outdoor environments provided an experience that was developmentally challenging, diverse, creative, relaxing and enriching for the children. The children engaged in open ended play and sensory educational activities in the indoor environment. The care room was bright and spacious and was adequately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. A separate sensory room was available and accessed for children who required some quieter time. The transitions in the changes of activities in the room were facilitated as the adults notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning. The children played on their own and as part of a group and chose their individual activities throughout the sessions. The adults engaged in discussions and story time, played individual and group games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in constructive, manipulative, creative, sensory and pretend play. Designated areas of interest with

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appropriate and accessible supporting materials and equipment were available to the children. The defined areas included a home corner, rest and reading area, construction area, arts and crafts and sensory area. Low-level units throughout the room contained a large quantity of imaginative, constructive and manipulative equipment and toys that were readily accessible to the children.

An enclosed outdoor area was accessed on the school grounds to the side of the building, and a large tarmac area was accessed by the children for a range of gross motor activities which included running and ball games.

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 entrance to the service was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded daily. The adults supervised the children at all times during the inspection.
- Cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- The sanitary facility was equipped with liquid soap and a lidded, lined pedal operated bin.
- Handwashing by the children was encouraged and supervised by the adults.
- The children's personal belongings were stored individually in the playroom in a designated storage area.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were completed by the adults and children on a monthly basis.
- A fire assembly point was readily identifiable by signage and identified by the adults working in the service.
- The fire exits and routes were clear from obstruction throughout the service.

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Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for three adults in the service. However, the vetting disclosure in respect of two adults was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice.

Infection Control:

The following posed a risk of cross infection;

2. Warm water was not provided at the wash hand basins which were used for children's handwashing in the sanitary accommodation and the playroom. Water temperatures of 11.1°C and 11.5°C respectively were recorded. This is a recurring non-compliance and was also non-compliant on inspection on 24 April 2023.
3. The children used cloth hand towels for hand drying at the wash hand basins which were located in the children's sanitary accommodation and in the playroom.
4. A pedal operated bin was not provided in the playroom. Children were observed to open the lid of the bins with their hands when disposing of waste.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- 1.
1. Garda vetting renewal has been applied for.

Infection Control:

2. The issue in relation to the provision of hot water at the wash hand basins is ongoing and currently in discussions.
3. Disposable paper towels will be used for hand drying.
4. A pedal operated bin will be provided for the safe disposal of waste.

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Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

No documentation submitted.

Infection Control:

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The non compliances identified in relation to General safety and Infection control will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was provided in the service.

(b)

The first aid box was available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency

Non-Compliance Information

(1)

The adults working in the service on 03 December 2025 did not have a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training. It is acknowledged that one adult working in the service on the day of inspection held a current qualification in basic paediatric first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)

No response received.

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Supporting documentation submitted

(1)

No documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance under subsection (1) of this regulation will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for twenty-two children attending the sessional service. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2026.