

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH067
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Name of Service:	Naiscoil Lorcan
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Address of Service:	Omeath, Dundalk, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A91 E265
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Name of Registered Provider:	Donna McGuinness
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	29/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Child Wellbeing Centre, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	M.Flood
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

Naiscoil Lorcan was established in 2008 and operates as a sessional pre-school service which participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service caters for a maximum of 22 children and operates from 9:00hrs to 12:30hrs each weekday.

The service operates from a prefabricated building on the grounds of the Primary school in the coastal setting of Omeath in Co. Louth. It consists of a playroom with adjoining sanitary facilities, storage area and access to an outdoor play area on the premises. There is also parking onsite for drop off and collection.

Staffing

The service employs 3 staff including the registered provider, who all work directly with the pre-school children.

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.

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

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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 would like 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, 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

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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)&(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge who is also the registered provider and deputy person were on the premises when the inspector arrived on the premises and were present throughout the inspection.

(c) When questioned staff were familiar with the management structure within the service and the roles and responsibilities of the various staff members.

(2) Four staff files were reviewed including files for the registered provider, two childcare staff and the contracted music teacher. The following vetting documents were available:

(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for each of the 4 staff members.

(c) A processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for all 4 members of staff. The registered provider was found to adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 2 out of 3 members of staff, including the registered provider who work directly with the preschool children held at least the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification on the National Framework of Childcare Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Documentary evidence was not available of the required international police vetting for 1 staff member who have resided outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Sufficient documentary evidence was not available to determine that 1 staff had achieved the minimum required level 5 childcare qualification, or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(d) Through discussion with staff member it has been identified that she has not resided in the UK for a continuous period greater than six months therefore international police vetting is not required.

Going forward all new staff will have international police vetting on file prior to starting in the service if they have resided outside Ireland for a continuous period of 6 months.

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(4) Staff member has completed her level 6 qualification and is awaiting level 6 qualification certificate.

Notwithstanding, she has identified that a recognition of prior learning is needed she is awaiting correspondence from the education board to support her towards recognition of the completion of her level 5 certificate.

Summary Comment

The registered provider submitted details of the corrective and preventative actions taken in the service to address the non-compliances. The inspector accepts the registered providers response regarding the non-compliance under Regulation 9 (2)(d).

However, as sufficient evidence of the required minimum level 5 childcare qualification or equivalent has not been received to date, the under compliance under Regulation 9 (4) has not been addressed and remains non-compliant.

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 there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) On the day of the inspection when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service the following adult:child ratios were observed

- There were three staff (including the registered provider) working directly with the 9 pre-school children present, aged between 3 to 4 years.

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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 following examples demonstrate how the registered provider ensured that children's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated in the service.

Basic needs

- The children's care needs were attended to on a regular basis for example, hands were washed before mealtimes and after toileting, noses were wiped frequently.
- Independence with toileting was promoted for the children who were toilet trained, and discreet supervision was also provided by staff as required.
- Some of the children were observed to access the soft area to rest or read a book, or to take a break from activities.
- Snack time was observed to be a social, interactive occasion with all staff and children. The staff confirmed to the inspector that the children choose where they sit at snack time. independence was promoted and the children were observed to access their own lunch in the fridge and to tidy up themselves after lunch was finished. The staff were observed to offer assistance to the children e.g. *"does anyone need help? excellent job....well done."* . During snack time, the children and staff were observed to chat about what they had for lunch, where they were sitting and how they could help their friends.
- The children all had a change of environment to the outdoor area on a number of occasions. They were encouraged to dress appropriately for the wet weather and provided with assistance if required.

Supporting relationships

- The adults demonstrated sensitivity, warmth and positive regard for the children as evidenced in the positive use of language and soft tones in the playroom e.g. *"...good girl...now use blue tissue to dry your hands...good girl well done."*
- Parent/staff communication occurred at drop off and collection, and the staff reported that the service also use a phone messaging service to communicate with parents. One to one meetings take place as

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required. An interactive group is reported to happen at Christmas time, where the parents are invited to attend the service and take part in activities with the children and staff e.g. decorate gingerbread men

- When questioned, the staff were familiar with strategies used, to include and encourage the children who required additional supports while attending the service.
- Staff meetings are reported to occur and also the use of a small messaging service to communicate. The staff also confirmed that they discuss any queries or concerns that they may have about the children on a daily basis if required.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The playroom has been recently developed since the last inspection. There was a variety of toys and equipment that supported many aspects of the children's development available in the playroom. The toys and equipment were positioned on open low-level shelving which promoted independence and facilitated choice for the children. The toys and equipment available were divided into specific areas of interest including a home area, a soft area, with soft cushions and books, a dress up area that supported imaginary and role play, sensory play equipment which included sand and water trays and activity trays for playdough. Each of these areas were supported with equipment and materials that enhanced the play experience for the children and promoted areas of development. There were also a variety of low-level toy boxes that included blocks, manipulative toys and animals. All toy boxes were labelled with photographs of the toys contained within so that the children could select and replace their chosen toy of interest and promote independence.

There was evidence that the children had completed thematic art pictures, which included the childrens' cocoons, caterpillars and butterflies.

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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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were appropriately stored out of the reach of children.
- The staff were observed to carry out a risk assessment of the outdoor area prior to the children having access to the area.
- The outdoor area was gated and secured to prevent a child exiting the area unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing practices.
- Effective hand washing practices were observed during the inspection, after toileting and outdoor play and prior to snack time.
- The pedal operated bins observed in use in the service, were appropriately maintained.
- The staff when questioned were familiar with the cleaning procedures for the toys and equipment in the service and documentary evidence was also maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were documented as being carried out on a monthly basis in accordance with best practice guidelines.

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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 registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was at all times available to the children attending the service. Documentary evidence was available of an up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) qualification for two adults in the service.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid box available in the service was stored in a conspicuous location where it was easily accessible in the event of an emergency.