

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH001
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Name of Service:	Naionra Na Cre Duibhe
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Address of Service:	Creaghduff, Coosan, Athlone, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N37 D9W6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Cait Ui Suibhne
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes
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 Early Years' Service provides a sessional service and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme through the medium of the Irish language. The age range of children enrolled in the service is 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates from 09:00-12:30 Monday to Friday.

The service is located in a purpose-built unit on the grounds of the registered provider's home consisting of a large playroom with its own entrance. There is an outdoor play area adjacent to the service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two adults. The designated person in charge and a staff member were working directly with children on the 12 June 2026.

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

Regulation 11 -Staffing levels - (1) (3)

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

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Regulation 20 – Rest and play facilities

Regulation 21- Equipment and Materials

Regulation 22- Food and Drink

Regulation 23- Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 24- Checking in and out and record of attendance (1)(3)(a)(b)

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

Regulation 26 -Fire safety measures - (1)(a)(b)(4)

Regulation 28 – Insurance

Regulation 32- Complaints (1)

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, 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.*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Following a review of previous inspection findings, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that one new staff member had commenced in the service since the last inspection on the 5 September 2024.

(2)(a)(b)

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Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the new staff member.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the new staff member.

The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the new staff member had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

The new staff member working directly with children held a major award at level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education 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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.

(3)

There were twenty children attending the morning session supervised directly by the registered provider and a staff member.

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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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Children were happily engaged learning through play in the indoor and outdoor environments supported by the registered provider and staff member. Children enjoyed preparing for their upcoming graduation day, participating in role play in their "three little pigs" play, singing songs and performing rhyming actions. Children were encouraged to be independent as they dressed for outdoor play in their coats. Children enjoyed freedom of movement in the various interest areas supervised by the adults.

The adults were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities and at snack time. Adults sat with children encouraging conversations and interactions with the children while eating. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

Upon discussion with the inspector the registered provider demonstrated how the service worked in partnership with parents. A verbal handover is given on collection. A short messaging system (SMS) is used to send updates and information to parents. One to one telephone calls with parents as required. The children's learning journal depicting all their play and work activities and child development observations are shared with parents at the end of the term. Parents are invited into the service for the graduation day planned for the following week.

Links to the community from the service was noted as a dental assistant and the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) were invited into the service to discuss their professions with the children. Smooth transitions to national school are facilitated by the local infant school teachers attending the service to meet the children.

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The pre-school room was bright and colourful. A range of developmentally appropriate play experiences were available for children. Children were observed to enjoy free play in the interest areas that included arts and crafts, a home corner, a cosy rest area, dress up with a mirror and sand play.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

(4) Where outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access is provided on the premises of a sessional pre-school service other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, a temporary pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that such outdoor space is suitable, safe and secure.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Rest areas were provided in the pre-school room.

(4)

The outdoor play area was safe and secure surrounded by high walls and green hedging. A grass and tarmac surface was noted. Toys and equipment included two sets of swings, a climbing frame with slide, a climbing wall, a playhouse, tricycles and bicycles.

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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

There was a numerous selection of suitable and sufficient play materials and equipment to support children for various forms of creative, imaginary, manipulative and sensory play in the indoor and outdoor environment in the service.

The tables and chairs were child sized suitable to their age and development.

Equipment was well maintained, durable and easy to clean.

Children's belongings were stored in the front entrance area of the service.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The parents provided healthy snacks for children attending the sessional service. Children enjoyed sandwiches, crackers, a selection of fruit, vegetables and yoghurts with water to drink. A refrigerator was available in the pre-school room for the storage of perishable goods.

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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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

The premises was visually clean. Cleaning schedules were available for review. Warm running water, paper hand towels and liquid soap were available for use in the sanitary accommodation. Windows provided natural ventilation in the pre-school room and mechanical ventilation was in operation in the sanitary accommodation. Foot operated pedal bins were available for the hygienic disposal of waste. Children washed their hands before the snack and after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

A temperature reducing medication was stored inaccessible to children in the office and was available if a child should get a high temperature. There were no children in the service requiring medication. Health care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medication.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes from the service were unobstructed. The fire assembly point was noted in the outdoor play area.

Outing:

The registered provider stated the service conducts an annual outing from the service. The risk assessment for the most recent outing was reviewed by the inspector.

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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)(b)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

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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 was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)
An equipped first aid box was located in the pre-school room.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to adults caring for children in the service.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)
A written record for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 15 May 2026.

(b)
A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and firefighting equipment in the premises were serviced in August 2025.

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(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the pre-school room.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

The service's complaints policy was available and reviewed. The relevant details in respect of (a)(b)(c) were noted in the policy.