

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017CE077		
Name of Service:	Spraoi Early Learning Centre		
Address of Service:	Heather Hill, Limerick Road, Ennis, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95PO34		
Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Murphy		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	09/06/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	70	PM 70
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:	A. McCarthy & J. Hayes		
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

Spraoi Early Learning Centre was established in 2017, as a privately owned service on the outskirts of Ennis town. The service facilitates care for children on a full day care basis, Monday to Friday from 08:00 to 18:00. The single storey, purpose-built childcare facility accommodates five care rooms and three sleep rooms.

The care rooms included the Chicks and the Dinosaurs rooms (age range: one to two years), the Hippos room (age range: two to three years), the Penguins room (age range: two to four years) and the Giraffe room (age range: four to five years). Designated outdoor play areas are located at the rear and side of the building. A large car park with set down parking is available to the front of the building.

Staffing

Eighteen adults are currently working in the service. On the 09 June 2026 thirteen adults worked directly with the children. The area manager and an auxiliary person who prepares, cooks and serves the food were present. The area manager provided an administrative role during inspection. The registered provider is the owner of the service and does not work in the service.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The regulations inspected included:

Regulation 9-Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4), (7)(a)(b)(c)

Regulation 10- Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

Regulation 11-Staffing levels (1) (3) (8)(a)

Regulation 16 Record in relation to pre-school service (1)(k)

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (3)

Regulation 32 - Complaints (1)(a)(b)(c)

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 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

An inspection took place following receipt of information submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

The Child Protection Policy and Child Safeguarding Statement were referred to the Child Safeguarding Statement Compliance Unit for review.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the area manager, manager, 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.*

(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;*

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*(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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

On the 09 June 2026 the service and area managers were available, and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The area and service managers were available during the inspection.

(c)

A clear management structure was identified in the service. During the inspection the area manager, the service manager and a person who is able to deputise were available. Photographs of the management team detailing their roles and responsibilities were displayed at the entrance to the service and on the door of the service's office. Photographs of the adults caring for the children were displayed outside the care rooms and at the entrance to the service.

(2)

Files were reviewed in respect of the six adults who had commenced in the service since the last inspection 11 February 2026. The findings included the following:

(a)

Nine written and validated references from past employers were available.

(b)

Three written and validated references from a source other than a past employer were available.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the six adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

International police vetting was available in respect of three adults who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(3)

The procedures outlined in the service's recruitment policy and outlined in paragraph 2 were carried out prior to the adults being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with the children attending the service.

(4)

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The six adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications ranging from Level 5 to Level 7 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(7)(a)(b)(c)

The service held the required policies, procedures and statements as specified in Schedule 5. Evidence of induction, training and supervision were available for the adults that had commenced employment since the last inspection. The adults working directly with the children demonstrated an awareness of the service's policies, and outlined the training received prior to commencing in the service. The practices outlined were in accordance with the service training, supervision and recruitment policy.

All staff received recent training on the services Child Protection Policy and its implementation.

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 service held a written and a digital copy of the required policies, procedures and statements as specified in Schedule 5.

The following policies were reviewed and contained the required details and information:

- Complaints policy;
- Policy on accidents and incidents;
- Recruitment policy;
- Staff training policy;
- Supervision policy.
- Policy on managing behaviour;

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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)

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

(2)

On the 09 June 2026 the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained. Fourteen adults cared for the seventy children in attendance in the morning and thirteen adults cared for the seventy children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

The staff rosters reviewed demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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:

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

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Compliance Information

(1)k)

A sample of ten accidents, injuries and incident records involving pre-school children attending the service were reviewed since the last inspection from 11/02/2026 to 09/06/2026. The records were completed with the required details and available on the electronic application system. These records detailed guardian/parental signatures after the accidents, injuries and incident occurred.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(3)

During the inspection no practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were observed in any of the five care rooms. The adults working directly with the children interacted with them in a kind and respectful manner and demonstrated an awareness of prohibited care practices. The adults demonstrated an understanding of the service's policies relating to suitable care practices and records of engagement in relevant training were available on file.

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.*

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Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)

The service maintained a complaints policy. The service's policy outlined the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service; the manner in which a complaint shall be dealt with and the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with. Management and the adults working directly with the children demonstrated an understanding and knowledge of the complaints policy for the service.