

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC272
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Name of Service:	Model Farm Road (Cork) Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Model Business & Technology Park, Model Farm Road, Model Business & Technology Park, Cork, Co Cork
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Eircode:	T12 WP96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine Bermingham, Seán O'Mahony
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Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	17/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	155	PM	123
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue and J Dennehy
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection Registration Manager

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	N/A
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Description of service

This service operates as a privately owned full day care service which was established in 2006. It is registered to cater for children 0 to 6 years and children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service is currently catering for children aged from 15 months upwards. The service is open from 7.30am until 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Model Farm Road Childcare Ltd is a purpose-built building located within the Model Business & Technology Park in Co Cork. The service consists of 11 rooms: Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler, Playschool Junior, Playschool, Preschool 1, Preschool 2, Preschool 3, Montessori 1, Montessori 2 and the Cabin room. There is a main reception area, office, kitchen and sanitary facilities for children and adults located within the building. The outdoor area is located to the rear of the building. There is a car park located to the front of the service which facilitates the dropping off and collection of children.

Staffing

The service currently employs 48 adults, 44 of whom work directly with the children. The registered provider is available on site and there are 4 deputies available in the event of their absence. There is currently one Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) adult working in the service. There are three staff working in the kitchen and one caretaker attached to 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

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 record of a preschool child, Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of child and Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, Toddler, Playschool Junior, Playschool.

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.

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 and deputy person in charge on the premises on the day of inspection. In the event the person or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available.
 - (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service.

(c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy persons in charge, early years educators and relief workers.

(2) There are 48 staff that work in the service; all 48 staff files were open to inspection.

(a) Of the 96 references required, 88 validated references were available from past employers.

(b) Of the 96 references required, 8 validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 48 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Year Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for 21 adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file.

(4) All 44 staff working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least 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.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation.
 - In the Wobbler 1 room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 4 children aged between 15 months and 16 months of age, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 4 children.
 - In the Wobbler 2 room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 12 children aged between 16 months and 24 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 4 staff working with 11 children.
 - In the Toddler room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 12 children aged between 18 months and 26 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 11 children.
 - In the Playschool Junior room in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 15 children, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 4 staff working with 13 children.
 - In the Playschool room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 17 children aged between 2 years and 9 months and 3 years and 2 months, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 3 staff working with 16 children.
 - In the Preschool 1 room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 20 children aged 3 years to 4 years, attending sessional care and full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 13 children.
 - In the Preschool 2 room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 20 children aged between 3 years and 4 years, attending sessional care and full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 14 children.
 - In the Preschool 3 room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 12 children aged between 3 years and 4 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon there were 2 staff working with 12 children.
 - In the Montessori 1 room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 17 children aged 4 years to 5 years. In the afternoon this class was joined with Montessori 2, there were 3 staff working with 19 children.

- In the Montessori 2 room in the morning, there was 1 staff working with 11 children aged 4 years to 5 years, attending sessional care and full day care.
- In the Cabin room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 15 children aged 3 years to 4 years, children attending sessional and full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 10 children.

(8)

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the service operation hours. This was evident through the staff rota.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

(1) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 12 of the children registered as attending the service. The records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

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) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

Basic Needs:

- Nappy changing with the younger children was carried out regularly and promptly in the rooms observed.
- Children's toileting and hygiene needs were attended to regularly and staff assisted children when they needed it.
- Staff engaged in positive and meaningful conversations with the children throughout the day. Children were relaxed and comfortable with staff. The inspector observed staff members signing songs with the children in the outdoor area.
- Staff spoke at the children's level, in a soft tone. Staff were in tune with the children's emotions, comforting children when they were upset.
- Water bottles were available to the children in the rooms and outdoors throughout the day.
- Food and snacks were provided by the service. The morning snack was a selection of fruit and the hot meal observed on the day was beef stew and mashed potatoes. This was available for children who attended on a full-time basis. Parents/guardians provided snacks for children who were attending on a sessional basis. The staff informed the inspectors that alternative food was provided based on children's food preferences.
- The Playschool Junior room, the Playgroup room and Montessori 1 room had a supply of tissues available to the children. Children would clean their own noses and staff supported children when required. The staff provided each child with a facecloth for use after the hot meal was served.
- The day of inspection was very hot and sunny, staff members were observed ensuring each child had sunscreen applied and was wearing a sun hat.

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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the entry of an unauthorised person into the service or unsupervised exit of a child.
- Cleaning chemicals were safely stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area was secured with iron fencing.
- Visibility strips were observed on low laying windows.
- All emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction.

Infection Control:

- Windows were open for natural air ventilation.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables between activities and prior to meal times.
- Regular handwashing was observed after outdoor play and before snack time. Staff were observant of handwashing and ensured children's hands were clean from dirt from outdoor play.
- Pedal operated bins were observed in the main rooms and sanitary facilities.
- All cots were fitted with waterproof mattress covers and placed 50cm apart.

Administration of Medication:

- No administration of medication was observed on the day of inspection. Staff were aware of the storage and appropriate practices in relation to medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children had assigned cots in the Wobbler 1 and 2 rooms. Each child's sleep plan was displayed above the cot.
- Stackable beds were used to accommodate sleep in the Toddler room and junior preschool room. Each child had their own sheets.
- The staff demonstrated through discussion with the inspector that they were familiar with the appropriate procedure for conducting physical checks of sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Firefighting equipment was available throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The wooden gate in the Playschool Junior room was broken. This poses a risk of injury to a child.
2. The radio cable in the Playschool room was low laying and children could reach the cable which could cause injury to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider removed the broken wooden gate from the Playschool Junior room. The service assessed pieces of equipment in the room and removed any broken pieces.
2. The radio cable in the Playschool room was re-fitted into the enclosed casing following the inspection. The radio was subsequently removed and was replaced by a wireless speaker.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence was received by Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate.
2. Photographic evidence was submitted to Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

A copy of the insurance certificate for the service was furnished to the inspector. The information provided on the insurance certificate included:

- The contact details for the insurance provider.
- The name and address of the service insured.
- The number of children covered by the insurance was 202 children.
- The categories of insurance cover for the service.

The expiry date of the current insurance cover was 27 March 2026.