

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015CC440
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	McShortall Childcare Ltd.
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Woodfield, Station Road, Blarney, Co Cork
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<b>Eircode:</b>	T23 YXK2
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mary McShortall
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	28/11/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	52	PM	41
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	N O'Donoghue
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

McShortall Childcare Ltd. is a registered privately operated early years service in operation since 2007. The service provides education and care to children from 0 to 6 years offering a choice of sessional, part time or full day care service and for the children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The registered opening hours are from 7.30am to 6.00pm each day Monday to Friday. The service is currently operating from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday. The service also operates a school aged service.

McShortall Childcare Ltd. operates from a purpose-built childcare facility located on the entrance to a suburban residential estate in the outskirts of Blarney, Co Cork. There are four playrooms located on the ground floor. There is one designated separate sleep room adjacent to the Wobbler room, staff room, office, storage areas and a catering kitchen. The outdoor play area is located to the rear of the facility. The premise has a parking area to the side of the property.

### Staffing

There was a total of 25 adults attached to the service. This includes 17 childcare practitioners who work directly with the children, 3 students, 2 cooks and 2 cleaners which were all serviced based. The registered provider is service based and also works directly with the 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of the child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Wobbler, Toddler and Preschool room.

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, 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 person in charge and childcare practitioners.

- (2) There are 25 adults attached to the service; all 25 adults files were open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 50 references required, 38 validated references were available from past employers.
  - (b) Of the 52 references required, 12 validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures has been obtained for all 25 adults with direct access to children. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for 9 of the 25 adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file for the two adults.
- (4) All 18 adults working directly with children held relevant qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education at least at Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications 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 Preschool room, early years children and school aged children were combined.

- In the Wobbler room in the morning there were 2 staff working with 7 children, aged between 1 year and 2 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 8 children, aged between 1 year and 2 years. One student was also observed in the room.
- In the Toddler room in the morning there were 2 staff working with 9 children, aged between 1 year and 3 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 9 children, aged between 1 year and 3 years. One student was also observed in the room.
- In the Preschool room in the morning there were 2 staff working with 19 children, aged between 3 years and 5 years, 11 of these children were attending full day care and 8 children were attending sessional care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 11 children, aged between 3 years and 5 years.
- In the Playschool room in the morning there were 2 staff working with 17 children, aged between 2 years and 8 months and 4 years, 13 of these children were attending full day care and 4 children were attending sessional care. In the afternoon, there were 2 staff working with 13 children, aged between 2 years and 8 months and 4 years.

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster from the two weeks preceding the inspection and observation on the day demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

## 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:

- Staff supported children with toileting. Staff encouraged independence and provided support as required.
- Children had access to soft tissues to clean their noses themselves.
- Drink bottles of water were brought in from home, children had access to these bottles at all times.
- Staff provided support to children that needed help when eating and children were encouraged to be self-sufficient.

##### Supporting relationships:

- Staff completed individual activities with children. These activities included matching colours and pictures, speech development activities including making sounds associated with the pictures they were looking at.
- The staff in each playroom were observed to be caring and kind towards the children and other adults in the room. Staff used soft tones when speaking to the children and spoke to them at child level.
- The staff explained to the inspector that they communicate regularly with the parents, this was demonstrated by the use of a mobile application system to communicate with parents daily, sending pictures, videos, notes and messages.

##### Physical environment:

- The children were observed to freely move around the care rooms and outdoor areas. All children had access to the outdoor areas throughout the inspection.
- Children were encouraged to engage in a wide range of gross motor skills including jumping, running and bouncing.
- Fine motor skills were encouraged through puzzles, colouring and sorting activities.

- The care rooms were broken into clearly identified areas including construction, role-play, kitchen, and creative corner.
- A rest/quiet area was available in each room consisting of rubber mats, pillows and cushions if children required it.

### 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 internal and external doors of the service were secured and prevented children from exiting the premises and unauthorised persons accessing the service.
- Toys and equipment appeared in good condition and well maintained.
- Blind cords were securely out of reach of children.
- The openable windows were out of reach of children.

##### Infection control:

- Windows were open which allowed for fresh air circulation.
- Perishable food was observed in the refrigerators.
- Water temperatures were recorded in the sanitary facility between 36.8°C to 43°C.
- Staff were observed cleaning tables and chairs between activities.
- Foot operated bins were available in each room and sanitary facility.

##### Administration of medication:

- The medication observed in the service was clearly labelled and in their original containers.
- Health care plans were available for each child. Care plans were completed by the service and signed by both parents/guardians and staff.
- All medication was stored in the room, out of reach of children and clearly identified to each staff member in the room, if required.
- All medications were in date and staff explained they were confident in administering the medication.

##### Fire safety:

- Fire equipment was available which included fire extinguishers.
- Fire exits were clear of any obstruction and clearly identified.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General safety:

1. An extension lead was observed to be hanging loose and causing a trip hazard in the Preschool room. To ensure safety of children electric cables and wires are to be fixed to prevent children from tripping or falling.

#### Infection control:

2. Staff were observed to not wash the hands of children after nappy changing in the Wobbler room. It was also observed in the Toddler room that staff did not wash their hands between nappy changes. Not conducting regular handwashing after nappy changes posed a risk of cross infection to children and staff. Handwashing practices were discussed with the person in charge and a review was to take place.

3. Children's toys were observed to be stored in the Wobbler nappy changing room. These toys were observed to be in use by the children and placed back into the nappy changing room. This posed a risk of contamination to the children playing with these toys.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General safety:

1. The registered provider and person in charge moved the refrigerator in the room which no longer needs an extension lead. Staff were reminded to report any safety hazards promptly to management.

#### Infection control:

2. The management team forwarded the policy and handwashing reminder email that was sent to all staff following the inspection. Hand washing training will be facilitated by management to ensure staff are following the correct procedures.

3. The toys were removed from the Wobble nappy changing room. A sign was placed on the door of the nappy changing room reminding staff not to store toys in the Wobbler nappy changing room.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General safety:

1. Photographic evidence was forwarded to the Early Years Inspectorate.

#### Infection control:

2. The reminder email sent to staff was received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

3. Photographic evidence was sent to the Early Years Inspectorate.

## Summary Comment

All correspondence was examined. The non-compliances under Regulation 23 have been rectified, and the requirement has been met.

## 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 staff trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) were at all times immediately available to the children.

(2) The first aid box was assessed on day of inspection and was fully stocked.

(a) The first aid box was stored up high, out of reach of children and easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid box was accessible to staff in the event that a child may require it.

### 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 designated book was available to document regular monthly fire drills.
  - (b) A list, which detailed the number and type of firefighting equipment was maintained on file. The records indicated that the smoke detection system and fire alarm system was serviced on 30 May 2025 and the firefighting equipment was serviced on 14 May 2025.
  - (4) The fire evacuation procedure, outlining details of the steps to be followed in the event of a fire, was displayed in various locations throughout the premises. The fire assembly points were clearly signposted.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

#### Compliance Information

- (b) The service was maintained in a safe and secure manner. The entrance door was secured using a buzzer system to gain access. This prevented the entry of an unauthorised person or the exit of a child unsupervised. All visitors had to sign in and sign out of the service.
- (e) The children's and adults sanitary facilities are maintained in a suitable condition. The hot water supply is thermostatically controlled to remain under 43 °C. There were an adequate number of children and adults

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

bathrooms and wash hand basins for the number of children attending. Nappy changing facilities were suitable to the age and needs of the children.