

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR015
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Maples Creche & Pre-school
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	1 Maple Manor, Johnstown Road, Cabinteely, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D18 N523
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lynn Ruddle
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/08/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	33	PM	32
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Early O'Brien & R. Phillips
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Little Maples Creche & Pre-school offers full day care to children aged 0-6 years. The service operates from the ground floor of a purposely adapted detached house in a residential area of Cabinteely. There are three childcare rooms in the service, two sleep rooms and two outdoor areas. The service opens Monday to Friday between 7:45 and 18:00 hours.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs nine staff to work in the service including the person in charge. On the day of inspection, there were eight staff present and the person in charge arrived after the inspector's arrival at 10.15am. The registered provider was not present on the day of inspection.

### 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 and records. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(3)(4) - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8)(a) - Staffing levels

Regulation 15(1) – Record of a pre-school child

Regulation 16 (1)(a)(h)(i)(j)(K) - Record in relation to pre-school service

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15(1) – Record of a pre-school child and regulation 16 – Record in relation a pre-school service.

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 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

Following a discussion with the person in charge and inspection of the staff roster it was confirmed that the registered provider employs nine adults in the service.

(1)(a)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The deputy person in charge was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspectors with the person in charge arriving after this. Both adults remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)  
There was a clear management structure in the service that identified the lines of authority and accountability in the service.

(2)  
The files of nine adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included three staff members who had commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b) Of the 18 validated, written references that were required, 15 were available from a previous employer and 3 were available from a source other than a previous employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for nine staff members, demonstrating that the service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for three staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)  
Records were available demonstrating that all adults employed in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

### 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)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full-day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the morning of inspection there were 33 children being supervised by 9 adults with 32 children being supervised by 9 adults in the afternoon.

(8)(a)

There were a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection.

## 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)(a)-(i)

Ten children's records were sampled and reviewed. The records detailed the information which was required.

### 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:*

*(a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*

*(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

*(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*

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

### Compliance Information

(1)

(a) Curriculum Vitae were available on file and reviewed for three staff employed in the service since the last inspection on 22<sup>nd</sup> January 2024.

(h) Children's attendance was recorded on an electronic device on the day of inspection. These records included details of each child's arrival and departure times from the service.

(i) A record of the staff roster was available and was reflective of the staff present on the day.

(j) A sample of twelve medication records were reviewed and found to be completed appropriately with signatures from both staff and parents.

(k) A sample of ten accident and incident records were reviewed and found to be completed appropriately with signatures from both staff and parents.

### 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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

##### **Basic Needs**

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals are provided by the service for children attending on a full day care basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating cubed potatoes with coconut chicken curry for dinner. Staff advised that alternatives were available, and food preferences were catered for on the day of inspection. Additional helpings were available on request by children. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their dinner. Younger children were provided with bibs for dinnertime. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff supported younger children who needed assistance. Children appeared happy and content within each of the care rooms.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent including cleaning up after their play and meals.

There was a designated nap time in a cot room adjacent to the Wobbler Room. Stackable beds and cots were available for sleep time for children attending the Toddler room.

##### **Supporting Relationships**

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff interacted warmly with the children throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes.

Staff described how they record information about each child’s day detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes on an online application which is immediately available to parents.

### **Physical and Material Environment**

Care rooms were arranged to provide a range of play materials and areas of interest providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Areas of interest included small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, rest areas with books, home corners and dress up areas. The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials. Family photos, birthday displays, visual routines and children’s artwork were displayed in the care rooms.

The environment was laid out to support the children’s independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care rooms.

There are two fully enclosed outdoor play areas. One is located to the rear of the building and caters for children attending the Toddler and Montessori care rooms. The second is located to the front of the building and caters for children attending the Baby/Wobbler room. Staff advised that children from each care room had access to the garden at least twice per day. The outdoor spaces are directly accessible from each of the care rooms. The play areas have a variety of age and stage appropriate equipment and were adequately resourced.

### **Programme of Activities**

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in discussions observed both in play and at snack time where the adults encouraged the children to use words to describe their thoughts and feelings.

## 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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

### General Safety:

- The entrance door leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environments were safe and free from hazards.
- Medication was stored safely and out of the reach of children.
- Storage facilities for hazardous cleaning materials were inaccessible to children.

### Infection Control:

- Each care room had access to a separate sanitary area within the service. There were adequate nappy changing facilities for the number of children attending the service in nappies.
- There was warm running water, liquid soap and paper towels available in all care rooms and in the sanitary and nappy changing area of the Baby/Wobbler room.
- A foot pedal bin was available in the sanitary areas within the Baby/Wobbler room and the Toddler room for the safe disposal of used paper towels. Foot pedal bins were also available in all nappy changing areas.
- Table cleaning was observed before and after snack time.
- A cleaning schedule was present and maintained in all care rooms.

### Administration of Medication:

- There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of anti-febrile medication and prescribed medication and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required.
- Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication if required during discussions with the inspectors.
- There was a care plan in place for one child who requires emergency medication. The medication was in date and stored safely with all staff familiar with its location in the care room. Staff were able to adequately demonstrate the procedures to follow in the event of a medical emergency.

### Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes on an online application. Discussion with staff demonstrated that they were familiar with safe sleep guidelines. Documented sleep checks were reviewed for the previous week. All were completed, in date and staff signature included.

### Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, all emergency exits were observed to be clearly identifiable and were not obstructed.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### Infection Control:

A number of practices were observed which pose a risk of cross contamination and cross infection for staff and children attending the service as follows:

1. In the sanitary area adjacent to the Montessori room the lid and pedal were broken on the pedal bin requiring the lid to be lifted by hand for disposal of paper towels after handwashing.
2. On return indoors from the outdoor play area, prior to eating dinner, one staff member and six children in the Montessori room were not observed to wash hands. Three of these children sat at the table next to the exit door to the garden, two sat at the table closest to the handbasin within the care room and one child sat at the table closest to the sanitary area of the room.
3. While it is acknowledged that paper towels were available at the handbasins within the Montessori and Toddler rooms and within the kitchenette adjacent to the Toddler room, there was no paper towel immediately accessible at handwashing directly in the sanitary area of the Montessori room and in the nappy changing area of the Toddler room.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### Infection Control:

1. The registered provider has replaced the bin in the Montessori room and staff have been advised that in the future if the pedal bins are broken in the service, they are to be replaced immediately.
2. Staff members have undertaken re-training on the importance of handwashing for both staff and children. Spot checks will be undertaken by management to ensure correct handwashing procedures are adhered to.

- Staff must ensure that paper towels are replaced immediately and are to accompany children to the sanitary accommodation to ensure handwashing takes place and that paper towels are available. Spot checks will be undertaken by management across the service,

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **Infection Control:**

Photographic evidence has been submitted in relation to the installation of a new pedal bin.

A copy of the signed staff attendance at re-training on handwashing and responsibility for ensuring paper towels are replaced and available within the sanitary accommodation of the care rooms.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspectorate has deemed that the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance.

## Part VI - Safety

### **Regulation 28 - Insurance**

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

#### **Compliance Information**

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance which expires on 27 March 2026 to a cover a maximum of 42 children with the type of service covered being full-day care.