

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR053
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Name of Service:	Puddleducks Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Springvale Hall, Ticknock Hill, Sandyford, Dublin 18.
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Eircode:	D18 X0Y0
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Name of Registered Provider:	David Owens
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	04/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	59	PM	57
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, County Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill, Helen Sutherland
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).	
Conditions if applicable	Not applicable

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Description of service

Puddleducks Creche & Montessori was originally established in 2005 and is privately operated by the current registered provider since June 2025. The early years service is registered to provide full day care for children aged 0-6 years of age. A school-aged service is also provided on the premises.

The service operates from a purpose-built crèche facility on the ground floor of an apartment complex in Sandyford County Dublin. Opening hours are Monday to Friday from 8am to 6pm. Four care rooms are provided named; the Chicks, Waddler, Little Ducks and Big Ducks rooms and one room on the first floor, namely the Montessori room. A separate sleep room is provided. An outdoor area is available for the children on the premises.

Staffing

In total 18 staff are employed to work in the service including the cook. On the day of inspection 15 staff including the person in charge worked directly with the children. The registered provider arrived after the inspection commenced, supported the children directly to facilitate staff breaks, and remained for the feedback meeting.

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 however, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8 – Notification of Change in Circumstances. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 - Record in Relation to Pre-School and Regulation 19 Health, welfare and Development of Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Chicks, Big Ducks, Little Ducks and the Waddler rooms and did not include the Montessori 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 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.

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Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider did not notify the Agency in writing of the change of person in charge, as required. The registered provider acknowledged that this was an oversight on his part. It was also acknowledged that a Change in Circumstances form for the newly appointed person in charge was submitted on the day of inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1) A Change of Circumstances form for the newly appointed person in charge was submitted on the day of inspection. This will be done ahead of any changes in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of CIC submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider are satisfactory and deemed to meet the Regulatory requirement.

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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*
- (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.

Compliance Information

(1)

- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.*
- (b) The designated person in charge and deputy person in charge were on the premises during the inspection.*
- (c) There was a clear management structure and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.*

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(2) Following a discussion with the person in charge and a review of staff records it was confirmed 5 staff members and the registered provider commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 13 February 2025.

The inspection included a review of documentation in respect of these 6 staff members as detailed below. In addition, Garda vetting was reviewed for one staff member whose disclosure was identified as due for renewal.

(a), (b) Records were available to evidence references had been appropriately considered for each adult.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 6 staff members. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was required and available for 5 staff members.

(3) All records outlined under Regulation (2) above were dated prior to any staff member being assigned to work with the children.

(4) Six staff members employed to work with pre-school children held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at a minimum 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,

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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 a full day care service was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 59 children attending the preschool being supervised by 15 adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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:*
- (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)
- (h) Details of the attendance of each child in the Chicks, Little Ducks, Big Ducks and Waddler rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i) The staff roster was available on the day of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.
- (j) A sample of 21 medication administration records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.
- (k) A sample of 37 accident incidents records were reviewed. These records were signed by staff and parents and were completed appropriately.

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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, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the pre-school service. Rooms were arranged with age-appropriate materials and clearly defined areas of interest, including a home corner, construction area, dress-up area, and art area. Each area was well resourced and accessible to the children. Cosy spaces were available in each room to allow children to take a break or rest from activities as required. Children moved freely within their environment and were observed independently choosing activities they wished to engage in. During the morning some children were observed engaged in table top activities while others played happily and independently in different areas of their care room.

Staff interacted warmly and respectfully with the children, addressing them by name and maintaining eye contact during interactions. One child who was non-verbal indicated that he required assistance with completing a jigsaw puzzle, and staff responded promptly to support him.

Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals throughout the day. Bibs were available to prevent children's clothing from becoming soiled or wet. At lunchtime, shepherd's pie was served and additional portions were offered to those who requested more. Staff reported that an alternative snack is offered if children choose not to eat their meal. Children were encouraged to feed themselves, promoting independence.

A helper system was in place for older children. Two helpers were selected daily to take part in aspects of the routine, such as handing out placemats at mealtimes. This supported children's involvement and encouraged independence.

Drinking water was freely available to the children throughout the day. Staff supported children in managing their personal care needs. Individual cloths were used to clean younger children's faces. Children used the toilet as

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needed while being closely supervised. Children's nappies were changed at scheduled times and in between as required. Staff used these opportunities to engage individually with children in a caring and responsive manner.

Children who required sleep were provided with either cots or floor beds. They were made comfortable for sleep, with outer clothing and shoes removed, and soothers provided for those who used them.

Children had opportunities for outdoor play at designated times during the day. Staff supported children to dress appropriately for outdoor activities. During this time, children were observed moving freely, riding bikes and playing on the slide.

Staff reported that they communicate daily with parents and guardians at drop-off and collection times, supporting information sharing and a collaborative approach to the care of the children.

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 front door to the service was secured and an intercom system was in place to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised.
- Cleaning products and medication were kept out of children's reach. Low-level cupboards had child proof locks fitted.
- Cord blinds were secure.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff were observed to supervise children washing their hands after using the toilet, outdoor play and before meals.
- Children's nappies were changed in accordance with the nappy changing policy. Suitable pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of waste.
- A system was in place for sterilising soothers, and they were stored in individual containers after use.

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- In the Chicks room formula bottles of milk provided by parents were suitably stored in the fridge.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated an understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed including obtaining written parent/guardian consent. Detailed records were available of medicines given. These had been signed by the person who gave the medicine, a witnessing staff member and the child's parent / guardian.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were marked and kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- In the Waddlers room the vinyl cover on the child size sofa was torn and as a result could not be cleaned effectively.
- In the Waddlers room at sleep time 50cm spacing was not maintained between the cocoon floor beds posing a potential infection control risk.

Safe Sleep:

- In total 14 children under two years of age slept on floor beds. Twelve of these children were in the Waddler room and two in the Little Ducks room. There was no evidence that individual sleep plans had been completed by staff for these children. A sleep risk assessment document was available; however, the form was generic in nature and did not clearly identify or document individual risks specific to each child. While parental consent had been obtained for the use of cocoon floor beds, the associated risks were not clearly stated, nor was there sufficient evidence demonstrating that individual risk assessments had been conducted and documented by staff for each child. Additionally, the service's safe sleep policy did not include clear guidance regarding how individual sleep plans and risk assessments are to be completed and reviewed. As a result, the service was unable to demonstrate that appropriate, individualised safe sleep planning and risk assessment processes were consistently implemented for children under two years of age.
- In the Waddler and Little Ducks rooms staff caring for the children were carrying out the sleep checks every 15 minutes rather than every 10 minutes. This is contrary to the safe sleep guidelines.

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Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control

1. A removable washable cover has been placed on the child size sofa. Ensure any defects on furniture can be suitably repaired, covered or removed.
2. Waddler room floor beds have been spaced 50 cm apart and where necessary, head to foot to minimise infection control and best utilise space available. Ensure staff adhere to 50cm spacing when placing floor beds.

Safe Sleep:

3. Individual sleep plans have been put in place for each child and discussions have been held with each parent re. sleep plans for their child. An addendum to sleep policy has been created and sent to all parents. Ensure that all staff are aware of the sleep policy and the individual sleep plans for children are completed with parents ahead of children transitioning to floor beds.
4. It has been reiterated that sleep checks for all ages should be carried out every 10 mins and record sheets have been updated to state this, for clarity. Continue to reinforce that sleep checks be carried out every 10 mins, as per our sleep policy

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. Photographic and written evidence.
2. Photographic and written evidence

Safe Sleep:

3. Photographic and written evidence.
4. Written evidence.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider are satisfactory and deemed to meet the Regulatory requirement. Practice will be reviewed on next inspection.

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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 ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was available at all times.

Evidence provided demonstrated four staff members who were present had current First Aid Responder training certifications.

(2)(a), (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous place in each care room on the premises and was available to the children attending the service at all times.

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) The monthly record of fire drills was available.

(b) The number type and maintenance record for fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms was available. The fire fighting equipment was serviced on the 17 December 2025 and the smoke alarm was serviced on the 22 September 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the main hall and in most of the care rooms.