

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR074
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Ashgrove Creche & Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	61 Lwr Churchtown Road, Churchtown, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D14 FY70
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Andrea Byrne
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	07/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	30	PM	27
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H Sutherland, R Duff
<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

Ashgrove Crèche & Montessori is a full day care service located in an urban, residential area of Churchtown, South County Dublin. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:45 and 18:00 hours and provides care and education to children aged between one and six years. The service is a purposely adapted, single storey residential property and comprises of four care rooms. A fifth care room is provided on the grounds of the service in a purpose-built log cabin. The children have access to an outdoor play area to the front of the premises with artificial grass surfacing which is divided into two separate play spaces.

### Staffing

There are currently sixteen staff members employed in the service including the registered provider and a cook. On the day of inspection there were twelve adults present including the registered provider, nine education staff, a student and a cook. One staff member is employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) and a second is employed as relief cover. The person in charge arrived after the inspectors arrival and remained present in the service for the duration of the 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

Regulation 11(1), (2) Staffing levels

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

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 First aid

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, 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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
  - (c) Conversation with staff and review of documentation on display in the care rooms detailing roles and responsibilities evidenced a clear management structure within the service.
- (2) Following a conversation with the registered provider it was confirmed that one staff member had commenced employment since Regulation 9 was last inspected on 25 November 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of the adult as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)

and (3) were reviewed for the student and 9(2) (c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for three adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) Two written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Two written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for five adults.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no adults had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
  - (b) Conversation with staff confirmed there was no person in charge or a named deputy person in charge on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.
- (3) Documentary evidence available indicated that one adult did not have their references validated prior to commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Evidence of qualifications was not available for three staff members currently employed to work directly with the children.
  - 1. There was no evidence of a qualification for one staff member.
  - 2. Documentation available for review for two staff members one of which was new to the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected, did not demonstrate that a full award had been achieved.

Regulation 9(4) was found to be non-compliant on the previous inspection of the service dated 25 November 2024. In response to this previous non-compliance the registered provider stated 'Staff member 1 with no cert will not be working at the service until the cert/transcript of results is available this is expected by mid-January 2025. Staff member 2 with no cert is awaiting a replacement cert from QQI.'

The preventive actions submitted following this inspection has not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
  - (b) A new third person has been put in charge and the registered provider has updated the roles and responsibilities and all staff members have been notified. Additionally, a copy of the roles and responsibilities have been placed in each room.
- (3) References for this staff member were validated on the day of inspection.
- (4)
  - (1) The registered provider has obtained proof of qualification for this staff member.

- (2) . The individual is covering staff and is no longer working in the service as she is going back to college, by the time she returns she will have her full Level 8 qualification and corresponding certificate.
- The second staff member identified with no evidence of achievement of a full award has left the service.
- The registered provider stated that the service will ensure that evidence of full awards for all staff members will be available for review going forward.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- (1)
- (b) A record of roles and responsibilities submitted.
- (3) Evidence of validation of two references received.
- (4)
- (1) Evidence of a qualification for one staff member submitted.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 9 (1)(b), (3), (4) has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.

## **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.*

### **Compliance Information**

- (1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were nine adults available to thirty children.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the children's ages and type of service delivered.

## 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

Mealtimes in the service were observed to be a calm sociable experience. Staff advised that the service provides morning and afternoon snacks for the children and dinner which consists of a hot meal is prepared off site by an external catering company and delivered to the service. On the day of inspection children were provided with chicken and vegetable pie and additional portions were provided for children requesting more. Drinking water was available to children throughout the morning.

Nappy changing was carried out on a schedule and as required, staff were observed to use this time for warm meaningful interactions with the children. Older children were observed to use the toilet independently. Children were encouraged to develop self-care skills appropriate to their age and stage of development. For example, washing their hands before mealtimes, following nappy changing and using the toilet and tidying up after play. Children in the Playschool room and Toddler room were provided with the opportunity to sleep at a designated time following their dinner, staff told the inspector that children could sleep outside of these times if needed. Areas with rugs and cushions were available for older children to rest if required.

Staff were observed to be attentive and responsive to children, using positive tone of voice, eye contact and engaging in meaningful conversations. Play was child led, and children moved freely around the environment making independent choices and engaging with the resources available. Staff in the senior Montessori room advised that they observe children's play and plan activities based on the children's interests. For example, the theme of the week was the Olympic games as children showed an interest in their siblings sports days and learning about different countries. The inspectors observed staff engaging in collaborative discussions to share ideas on how to extend children's learning experiences during outdoor play.

Transitions were smooth and well managed, contributing to a calm predictable environment. Staff were observed using sand timers to support turn taking and sharing. This was demonstrated when a child independently requested the timer to help manage turn taking with a peer showing a clear understanding of positive social

strategies. When conflicts arose, staff supported children by providing appropriate language helping them to express their feelings and resolve disagreements respectfully.

The indoor environments offered a variety of resources to support children’s learning and development. For example, designated interest areas included small world materials, mark making materials, home corners, musical instruments, books, transport and construction materials, Montessori equipment, rest areas and libraries.

Resources and materials were stored on low level shelving supporting autonomy and self-directed learning. Both outdoor areas offered a variety of resources that encouraged exploration and physical activity such as a slide, climbing frame, sand tables, a playhouse, mirrors, large building blocks, bikes, large animals, balls and a black board.

### 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 secured with keypads to prevent unauthorised entry or children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Electrical cables were in good condition and out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelves safely out of reach of children.
- Staff demonstrated appropriate safety practices by applying sun cream to children prior to taking them to the garden.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Pedal operated bins were available in the sanitary areas.
- The changing mats were cleaned after each use.
- The service was observed to be clean and cleaning schedules were available for review.

##### Safe Sleep:

- Ten-minute sleep checks were carried out on sleeping children. Documented checks included the child’s position, colour, breathing pattern and the sleep room temperature.

- Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children’s developmental needs.
- The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature range.

### Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection.
- The inspectors found through discussion with staff that fire drills are carried out on a monthly basis.
- Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in prominent positions throughout the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A container containing water and a sterilising agent used for sterilising mouthing toys was stored at the back of a low-level shelf accessible to children in the Playschool room posing a risk to the health and safety of the children.
2. A piece of plastic had broken off the bench in the Junior and Senior Montessori Garden creating a sharp edge posing a potential risk of injury to children.
3. The heads of two screws were protruding from the mud kitchen in the Junior and Senior Montessori garden posing a potential risk of injury to children.

Ineffective maintenance of equipment and unsuitable storage of cleaning solutions creates hazards and can compromise the safety and wellbeing of children.

#### Infection Control:

4. One of the children in the Senior Montessori room was observed filling their water bottle from the sink in the sanitary room. Staff and the registered provider advised the inspector that this was common practice for children and that the water was drinking water. This practice poses an infection control risk to children as it is a sanitary area and is not appropriate for the provision of drinking water. After the concern was highlighted to the registered provider the inspector was advised that drinking water would now be retrieved from the main kitchen.
5. Staff members in the Toddler room and the Playschool room were observed to carry out consecutive nappy changes without changing their apron between each change. This practice poses a risk of cross contamination and is a variance with the services nappy changing policy.

- Blankets used for children at sleep time were not stored individually. Staff in the Playschool room were observed storing the children's blankets together following sleep time.

### Administration of Medication:

- A sample of ten administration of medication records were reviewed and six were found to be incomplete and did not contain the required details to ensure safe administration to a child as follows.
  - Two medication forms were missing the parents consent signature on the upper part of the form.
  - Two records did not have a witness signature.
  - One record did not have the name of the antibiotic recorded.
  - The child's name was not recorded on one record and another record did not have the child or the staff members surnames recorded.
  - Two records did not contain an expiry date.
  - During discussions with staff the inspector was informed that staff complete the parents section of the medication consent form on behalf of the parent and the parent signs it later that day. This is at variance with the medication administration policy in place in the service.

Incomplete medication forms and the practice of staff completing the parents section of the medication records was identified as non-compliant on the previous inspection on 25 November 2025. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider has not prevented the non-compliance from recurring.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

- The container containing water and a sterilising agent has been moved to a high shelf.
- A new bench has been purchased and the old one has been removed.
- The mud kitchen has been made safe and the screws were removed.

##### Infection Control:

- A new sink has been installed in the Senior Montessori room for provision of drinking water.
- The registered provider carried out nappy changing refresher training for all staff.
- Blankets are now stored in individual bags with each child's name.

**Administration of Medication:**

7. Refresher training on the process for completion of medication forms has been provided for each staff member and a staff member has been appointed to audit the books every two weeks.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

**General Safety:**

No evidence submitted.

**Infection Control:**

Photographic evidence of the new sink has been submitted.

**Administration of Medication:**

No evidence submitted.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and will be subject to review on the next inspection.

**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) There was evidence to show that six adults hold certification in First Aid Responder training and four were available for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in the service.

(b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.