

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR139
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Name of Service:	Lakelands Childcare
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Address of Service:	9 Lakelands Road, Upper Kilmacud Road, Stillorgan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	A94 HK38
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ceinwen Walsh, Vivienne Walsh
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date of Inspection:	28/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	33
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
Title:	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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Lakelands Childcare is a private early years service located in a residential area in County Dublin. The service operates from a two-storey, purposely adapted commercial building, consisting of four child-care rooms, sanitary facilities, a sleep room and an outdoor area. The service provides full-day care for children 0 to 6 years of age and opening hours are 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday.

Staffing

There are currently 14 staff employed to work in the service, including 2 registered providers and a cook. On the day of inspection there were 13 adults present, including one of the registered providers, the cook and 11 adults working 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 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-c), (2) (a-d) (3) (4) Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1)(2) Staffing levels

Regulation 15 (a-i) Records of a preschool child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25(1)(2)(a) (b) First aid

However, on inspection additional non-compliance that posed a risk was identified under Regulation 26 Fire safety measures and Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 and Regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Playschool room and the Wobbler 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, 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.
 - (b) A person appointed to deputise was on the premises when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the person in charge it was determined that three new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. Documentation required under Regulation 9 (2), (3), (4) was reviewed in respect of the three adults as

detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting were reviewed for all 14 adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) Four written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 14 staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in respect of three adults who had lived outside of the State for a period longer than six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed provided evidence that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the three adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the three adults held a qualification deemed appropriate by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

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 was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained for the duration of the inspection. There were 11 adults working directly with 31 children in the morning and 8 adults available to 33 children in the afternoon. The registered provider was also available to provide support when required.

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

A sample of ten children’s files were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a)-(i) was maintained for each child.

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

Meals and snacks were provided to the children in a regular and timely manner. Additional portions of food were available for children requesting more. Bibs were provided at mealtimes to protect children’s clothing. Drinking water was available and offered to children throughout the day. Self-feeding was encouraged and staff offered support to children when needed. Children’s nappies were changed on a schedule and as needed. Sleep was

facilitated at a scheduled time in the Playschool and Wobbler room and staff reported that children had the opportunity to sleep outside of these times if they displayed signs of tiredness. Children were observed to move freely and confidently around their environment without obstruction. Children in the Playschool room and the Wobbler room had the opportunity to spend time outdoors and were appropriately dressed for the weather.

Staff were observed to be familiar with children and interactions were warm and friendly. Staff invited suggestions from children during activities and provided time for the children to respond and have their voice heard supporting their language development and communication skills. Children's choices were respected and play was child led. Staff in the Playschool room were observed to sing songs to children to support the transition from the outdoor to the indoor environment. Moving room forms were in use to support smooth transitions from one care room to the next. Staff reported that parents have the opportunity to talk to staff about key aspects of their child's day at drop off and collection.

Age appropriate resources and materials were stored on open low-level shelving and were observed to be freely accessible to children. Materials available included construction materials, small world, sensorial, role play, puzzles, books, rest areas and musical instruments. Family walls and visual routines were on display in the care rooms. The outdoor area was surfaced with artificial grass and bikes, trikes, cars, blocks and stepping stones were available to children supporting the development of their gross motor skills.

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 entrance to the service was adequately secured to prevent unauthorised access or the children exiting unsupervised.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be safe for the age group, maintained and in good condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Children were supported to wash their hands before eating.

- Pedal operated bins, liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available in the sanitary areas.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated knowledge of how to safely administer medication to a child if required.

Safe Sleep:

- Records were available to demonstrate that ten-minute checks were carried out on sleeping children. The checks included the children's positions, the colour of their faces, breathing patterns and the room temperature.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were observed to be unobstructed for the duration of the inspection.
- Staff detailed the procedure to safely evacuate children from the service in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, the vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice Renewal of Garda Vetting.
2. A cabinet door located at children's level in the Playschool room was found to be inadequately secured to its hinges, creating a potential safety hazard.
3. Electrical cables were not securely attached to the wall in the Playschool room, posing a potential risk to the children's safety.
4. A staff member was observed carrying two children up a stairs during a transition from the outdoor area to the care room leaving no free hand to hold the handrail. This practice posed a risk to the safety of both children and the children walking behind the staff member.
5. A blind cord in the Wobbler room was not safely attached to the wall posing a risk to the children's safety.

Infection Control:

6. A number of nappy changing practices observed during the inspection posed a risk of the spread of infection as follows:
 - One staff member was observed placing a nappy bag containing a soiled nappy and wipes into the handwashing sink used by staff to wash their hands following nappy changing. Although there was

a pedal operated bin provided, the staff member was observed to use their hand to open the bin and dispose of the waste.

- Two children were not provided with the opportunity to wash their hands following nappy changing.
 - A staff member did not wash their hands after cleaning a soiled nappy changing mat.
7. A number of areas in the service were observed to have a noticeable accumulation of dirt and dust, posing a risk of the spread of infection.

The areas included:

- the nappy changing mats in both sanitary areas
 - the floor and sinks in the ground floor sanitary area
 - the shelving in one of the care rooms
8. Children's bedding was not stored individually in the Wobbler room, posing a risk of cross contamination.

Administration of Medication:

9. The registered providers did not ensure the children's administration of medication records contained the required information. A sample of six records were reviewed and found to be missing the following information:
- Parents signature
 - Details of why the child was receiving the medication
 - Childs date of birth

Safe Sleep:

10. The inspector observed one child under the age of two in the Playschool room and three children under the age of two in the Wobbler room sleeping on low level stackable beds. This practice does not align with current safe sleep guidelines.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been obtained for the staff member, and the registered providers have created a log of vetting requirements, including dates for renewal of Garda vetting for each staff member. This log will be checked monthly to ensure compliance.

2. The door was repaired the day after the inspection, and a DIY to do list has been added to the service's compliance checklist. Additionally, the staff handbook contains information on the requirement to alert the registered providers of any repairs required
3. The cables have been secured, staff were advised to ensure cables are tidy, and the checking of cables has been added to a checklist.
4. Staff have received training on using the stairs safely, and the policy on using the stairs has been updated.
5. The blind cord has been safely secured, checks on blind cords have been added to the service checklist, and staff have been asked to alert management of any equipment requiring repair.

Infection Control:

6. All staff have been retrained in the nappy changing procedure, with a particular focus on handwashing and a space has been created to hold nappy bags until they are disposed of in the pedal bin. Staff will be reminded regularly of the importance of hand washing and following the nappy changing procedure.
7. The nappy changing mats have been cleaned, and a deep clean of the changing mats has been added to the bathroom cleaning checklist. Management will ensure the bathrooms are cleaned daily, and staff have been advised to use the cleaning checklist and to clean handwashing sinks after messy play.
8. Individual baskets have been provided for children's bedding, and staff have been advised that they are to be used going forward.

Administration of Medication:

9. Staff have been retrained in completing the medicine book. A guidance note has been placed on the front of the medicine book and checks on the book has been added to the compliance checklist.

Safe Sleep:

10. Staff are now using the sleep policy and an individual risk assessment for any child under the age of two requiring a floor bed. In addition, new floor beds have been purchased.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Evidence submitted and reviewed

Infection Control:

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory 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) There was evidence to show that three adults hold certification in First Aid Responder training. Two of the adults were on the premises on the day of the inspection.

- (2)
- (a) Two suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and stored safely, in an easily accessible and prominent position in the hallway on the ground floor and first floor of the service.
 - (b) The first aid boxes were observed to be readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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)
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was up to date. Fire extinguishers were serviced on 22 October 2025 and smoke alarms were serviced on 30 January 2025.
 - (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in prominent positions around the service.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) During discussions with the inspector, staff reported that regular fire drills were not carried out in the service. Documentation reviewed evidenced that no fire drills were conducted in March, May, June, July and September 2025. The absence of regular fire drills poses a safety risk, as staff and children may be unprepared in the event of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (1)
- (a) A fire drill was carried out in November and drills will be conducted monthly going forward. Fire drills have been added to the managers task list to ensure they are planned and carried out consistently.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

During the inspection, it was observed that a staff member left two babies unattended in the Baby room to carry out checks on sleeping babies in a separate sleep room across the corridor. This practice posed a risk to the welfare and safety of the babies.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff will ensure there is cover in the room when carrying out sleep checks and have been advised to contact management or relief staff if needed. Signage has been placed on the wall in the care room detailing steps to follow when cover is required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence submitted and reviewed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 27 has been adequately addressed and the regulatory requirement has been met.