

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR148
Name of Service:	Dimples Creche & Montessori
Address of Service:	135 Ballyogan Road, Carrickmines, Dublin 18, Co. Dublin
Eircode:	D18 K168
Name of Registered Providers:	Gillian Doyle, Jason Doyle
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional
Date 1 of Inspection:	29/07/2025
Date 2 of Inspection:	30/07/2025

No of pre-school children Day 1:	AM	112	PM	111
No of pre-school children Day 2	AM	112	PM	109

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & S. Early O' Brien
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

Dimples Creche & Montessori is a privately owned full day and sessional care service which provides care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday. A school aged childcare service also operates from the premises.

The service is located in a commercial unit which has been adapted for use as an early learning and care facility in an urban area of south Dublin. Thirteen care rooms were available and eleven of these were in use for the care of pre-school children during the inspection.

The Baby Chicks room caters for children aged 8 months to 1 year. The Penguin Paradise and Bouncing Bunnies rooms cater for children aged 1 year. The Tiggywinkles room caters for children aged 1 to 2 years. The Puddleducks and Toddling Turtles rooms cater for children aged 2 years. The Narnia room caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. The Wise Owls room caters for children aged 3 years. The Peter Rabbits and Neverland rooms cater for children aged 3 to 4 years, and the Busy Bees room caters for children aged 4 to 5 years.

One cot room was provided, and cots were also available in four areas adjacent to care rooms where the youngest children attending the service were accommodated. A large, fully enclosed outdoor area was provided which was divided into separate areas to cater for the various age groups.

Staffing

The service currently employs 41 staff including the management team and a chef. There were 25 staff working directly with the children on both days of inspection who were supported by the management team. The registered providers do not work directly with the children but were present throughout 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/ records/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b)(c),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) – Management and recruitment,
11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,
16 (1)(h)(i)(j) – Record in relation to pre-school service,
19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
25 (1)(a), (2) – First aid,
26 (1),(4) – Fire safety measures.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations;

- 16 (1)(h) – Record in relation to pre-school service,
19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Chicks, Penguin Paradise, Tiggywinkles, Bouncing Bunnies, Puddleducks and Toddling Turtles rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulation 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby Chicks, Penguin Paradise, Tiggywinkles, Bouncing Bunnies, Puddleducks, Toddling Turtles and Busy Bees rooms.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 (1)(j) – Record in relation to 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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 31st July 2025 under Regulation 23 as there were no up to date maintenance records available for the fire fighting equipment and the smoke alarm system.

The registered providers submitted a response on 31st July 2025 which was deemed to satisfactorily address this non-compliance.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, person in charge, staff and children who were present during the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)(b)(c)
- The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were on the premises throughout the inspection. A clear management structure was in place in the service.
- (2)
- The inspection focused on the recruitment records for 19 adults employed since the last inspection on 9th July 2024 and one other adult employed to work in the service. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of these 20

adults and 8 other adults who work in the service. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows;

(a)(b)

Of the 40 validated, written references that were required, 29 were available from a past employer and 10 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the 28 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required and was available for 20 staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the 20 staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b)

One reference obtained in respect of one staff member from a source other than a past employer was not suitable as the source of the reference could not be considered independent or unbiased.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

An additional reference has been obtained for this staff member from a reputable source. Our new checklist for staff files state references must be from a previous employer or reputable source.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider

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Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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.

There were 112 children attending the service being supervised by 25 adults on both days of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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*

Compliance Information

- (h)
Details of the attendance of each child in the Baby Chicks, Penguin Paradise, Tiggywinkles, Bouncing Bunnies, Puddleducks and Toddling Turtles rooms were recorded at the time of entering and leaving the service.
- (i)
The staff roster was available on both days of inspection and reflected the adults working in the service.
- (j)
A sample of 40 medication administration records were reviewed. These records were completed appropriately.

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-

- (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)(b)
The service had a healthy eating policy in place and all meals were prepared on site. Meals were provided at regular intervals, and additional portions were readily available. Dinner was served from 11:45 and younger children were given bibs for dinnertime. Alternatives were offered to children who did not eat the main meal.

Mealtimes were relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as adults engaged with them helping when required.

Children were encouraged and supported to be independent, older children were observed using the toilet independently and cleaning up after their play and meals. Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after dinner. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Children in the Baby Chicks and Penguin Paradise rooms were placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness and there was a designated nap time for children attending the Tiggywinkles, Bouncing Bunnies, Puddleducks and Toddling Turtles rooms who required a nap. Suitable cots and low-level beds were provided appropriate to the children's age and stage of development. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff soothing the children as needed.

Staff demonstrated awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during their interactions with the children. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly and were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

Children from the Tiggywinkles, Bouncing Bunnies, Puddleducks and Toddling Turtles room were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and were dressed appropriately to the weather.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child using an online messaging application detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes and at arrival and collection time. Parents were observed in the care rooms during drop off and collection times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. On the second day of inspection in the Puddleducks room, three children were not offered a drink with their dinner. These children were placed to sleep following their meal with no drink offered.
2. On the first day of inspection, one child in the Baby Chicks room, aged 8 months, was not provided with the opportunity to feed themselves during dinnertime. A staff member held the bowl away from the child and spoon-fed the child. The child was not provided with the opportunity to develop hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills and to promote independence.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. All staff have been retrained in the importance of children hydrating prior to nap time. Cups of water shall be accessible on the tables throughout all meal times. This will be reiterated in all of our staff training going forward and a member of the management team will be closely monitoring the practice.
2. Children of all ages will be encouraged to self-feed and the bowl will be placed in the middle of the highchair. Our baby room staff have been retrained in this. This will be refreshed with all staff during ongoing training sessions. However, we do have babies enrolling in our service from four months old so we will have to monitor their individual development on when babies can commence self-feeding.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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 doors to the service were adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children during the inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The premises, equipment and materials appeared clean and maintained in good condition.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children and was stored separately when not in use. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration.

Safe Sleep:

- Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. Discussion with staff demonstrated that staff were familiar with safe sleep guidelines.
- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping on low level beds.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the outdoor area, a wooden picnic table was observed to be water damaged with splinters exposed in two areas posing a risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

Inspectors observed a number of practices which posed a risk of transmission of infection within the service:

2. The handwashing practices observed were inconsistent and at variance with the policy in place in the service as follows;
 - On the first day of inspection in the Baby Chicks room, children's hands were not washed before dinner. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 9th July 2024. The corrective actions as stated by the registered providers did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.
 - On the first day of inspection in the Penguin Paradise room, children's hands were not washed before their afternoon snack.
 - While it is acknowledged that children's noses were cleaned promptly in the Baby Chicks room, a staff member was observed to clean a child's noses and did not wash their hands following this.
3. Some nappy changing practices observed during the inspection were inadequate for infection control purposes and at variance with the service's nappy changing procedure. Staff did not consistently wash their hands following nappy changes and did not clean the nappy changing mat following nappy changes.
4. In the Puddleducks room, children were observed lifting the lid of the pedal bin to dispose of waste.
5. In the Baby Chicks room, staff were observed lifting the lid of the pedal bin to dispose of waste.
6. Twenty-eight cot mattresses did not have a waterproof mattress cover posing a risk of the spread of infection as they could not be adequately cleaned and disinfected.

Administration of Medication:

7. Antihistamine medication for four children with allergies attending the service was not stored in the relevant care rooms. This posed a safety risk of delaying appropriate medical attention if the child became unwell.
8. Medication for one child attending the Busy Bees room was not stored in its original packaging contrary to the service policy. This medication was stored loosely in the first aid box in the care room.

Fire Safety:

- An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 31st July 2025 as there were no up to date maintenance records available for the fire fighting equipment and the smoke alarm system. Maintenance of the fire fighting equipment had last taken place in June 2024. Quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had last taken place in January 2025.

The registered providers submitted a response on 31st July 2025 which was deemed to satisfactorily address this non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- The picnic table in our garden has been replaced with a new one and the old one has been removed. We are developing a digital practice for daily risk assessments of the garden. A designated manager will operate this system to ensure Dimples equipment meets high standards.

Infection Control:

- & 3.

After the last 2024 Inspection we hired a professional software developer to deliver an easy to watch and understand video particularly for staff who don't have English as their first language. We closed the service for an In-House Training Day where we focused on the Importance of Handwashing and Nappy Changes at our Health & Safety Station and staff were split into 4 different groups so it was disappointing to hear the same non-compliance. We have retrained staff in our handwashing policy and the importance of handwashing throughout all daily transitions. Currently we are testing new training methods and have created a new flyer with clear instructions to ensure this non-compliance does not reoccur. Regular monitoring from management on the handwashing and nappy changing will become a daily practice and we have planned for another Training Day in September 2025.

- & 5.

All staff have been retrained on how to use a foot pedal bin, a smaller bin has been purchased for the Puddleducks room and we are continuously reminding the children to use their feet to open the bin and not their hands. Our training programme has been redelivered to staff and we will continue to highlight the importance of using the foot pedal on the bin.

6. Adequate mattress protectors plus spares were purchased for all cots and fitted. Cots will be checked during our weekly inspections by a member of the management team to ensure children have secure, safe and hygienic sleep zones.

Administration of Medication:

7. & 8.

New antihistamine medication has been purchased for every room that requires this medication plus spare bottles have been purchased and stored in the management office. All staff have been updated on where to locate these medications. We have re-evaluated where the emergency medicine is stored in the classrooms we are in the process of installing shelving. We plan to locate the emergency medicine shelf in the same location, in every classroom to ensure continuity and speed of access for staff members if necessary. Staff have been reinforced when medication is getting low to call the management office to order a new batch. The management team will include this in their weekly checks.

Fire Safety:

9. On the 7th of August 2025 we had maintenance carried out on all of our fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm systems. We have employed the services of a new Fire Safety Company and signed a contract with them, and will ensure no more missed inspections. Currently we are in the process of redeveloping a new checklist system for Dimples to include weekly and monthly checks. Going forward we will digitally automate reminders for all the future due dates. Examples: Maintenance/Extinguishers/Fire Folders/Fire Drills to run simultaneously to ensure Dimples operates to the highest safety standards.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Infection Control:

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Administration of Medication:

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Fire Safety:

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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)

A person trained in first aid was immediately available to the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous locations within the service.

(b) First aid boxes were available to the adults and children in 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

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on 24th July 2025.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.