

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR182			
Name of Service:	St. Michael's College Pre-School			
Address of Service:	St. Michael's College Junior School, Ailesbury Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D04 A373			
Name of Registered Provider:	Lorna Heslin			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	07/05/2026			
No of pre-school children:	AM	16	PM	16
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency Brunel Building, Floor 7 Heuston South Quarter Dublin 8, D08 X01F			
Inspection undertaken by:	M Bermingham			
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).

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Description of service

St. Michael's College Pre-School is registered to provide full day care for up to 16 children aged 3-6 years. Opening hours are 08:00-15:00. The service operates from a single ground floor classroom within a junior School. Children have access to the school's outdoor sports grounds, play areas and gardens.

Staffing

The service employs three staff including a person in charge, who were all present and working directly with children on the day of inspection. The registered provider is the principal of the junior School and was onsite on the day of inspection.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 – Record of a Pre-School Child.

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

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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, person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

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

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

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

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(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 named person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge or the deputy were rostered to be present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place, as evidenced by observing the operation of the service and through discussion with staff.

(2)

Three staff were employed in the service including one who commenced since the last inspection on 21 September 2023, as determined through a review of previous inspection records and discussion with the person in charge. A review of vetting documentation found that:

- (c) One Garda vetting disclosure for the newly commenced adult was available. Garda vetting renewals were available in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate's regulatory notice requiring three-year Garda vetting renewal for all adults employed.
- (d) An International police vetting certificate was available for one adult who lived outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)

Qualification records were reviewed for one staff working directly with children who was found to hold a recognised equivalent of the required qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(b) Two written references for one adult were not available. It is acknowledged that there was evidence available to demonstrate that the registered provider verified two references for the adult.

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(3)

The procedures specified in 9(2)(b) above were not completed prior to one adult commencing in the service, as required. Allowing adults to work with children before their suitability is established may result in individuals who are not appropriate having access to children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) and (3)

The registered provider stated that:

- Written references were obtained for the adult.
- Going forward written references will be obtained immediately after speaking with a referee and prior to a new employee commencing employment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliances identified under regulation 9.

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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 was adhered to at all times during the inspection; there were 3 adults working with 16 children in both the morning and afternoon.
- (8)
- (a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times, as evidenced by discussion with management and staff.

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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

Twelve child records were reviewed and eight of the twelve records were found to contain the complete set of required information as follows:

- (a) The name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) The date when the child first attended the service.
- (c) Provision for recording the date when the child would cease to attend the service.
- (d) The names, addresses, and telephone numbers of parents and an alternative contact, and information on how to contact parents or an alternative contact during the operational hours of the service.
- (e) Authorisation for collection of the child.
- (f) Provision for the recording of any illness, disability, allergy, or special needs of the child and relevant information to support the provision of special care or attention.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child's medical practitioner.
- (h) Record of immunisations if any received by the child.
- (i) Written consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

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Non-Compliance Information

Four child records did not contain some of the following required information:

- (e) Authorisation for collection of the child.
- (h) Record of immunisations, if any received by the child.
- (i) Written consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(e), (h) and (i)

The registered provider stated that all required information is now on file and that the enrolment policy now reflects that children will not be permitted to attend the service if the information has not been provided in advance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider adequately addressed the non-compliance is identified under regulation 15.

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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

(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

The following observations demonstrated how children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the daily life of the service and how appropriate and suitable care practices were in place:

Healthy eating was promoted and children ate morning snack at 10:30 provided from home to include bread, crackers, fruit, cheese and yoghurt. The service provided Pork korma and potato slices for dinner at 12:30 and were offered second helpings. Mealtimes were calm and relaxed where children chatted and laughed socially with their peers and had ample time to eat at their own pace. Staff were knowledgeable about individual food intolerances and alternatives were available. Children drank water from their individual beakers at mealtimes that remained available to children throughout the day on a low-level countertop.

The children's voices and laughter evidenced their enjoyment of their play and activities on offer throughout the inspection. Staff supported and encouraged the children's interactions with peers using strategies and guiding children to resolve issues. Staff responded to children using comforting words and gentle nurturing. Transitions through the daily routine were managed seamlessly where staff used a bell and clearly explained the next steps. Children moved throughout the daily routine with familiarity and in an orderly and playful manner. Children's independence was supported through the allocation of jobs and children tidied up after snack and put on their own coats and hoodies when going outside.

Relationships around children and their sense of identity and belonging were promoted. Staff reported that communication with parents about activities and school news was provided digitally while daily discussion occurred at collection times. Photographs of parents involved in pre-school activities were displayed. Links with

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the school and community were evident through photographs of visits by junior school children to the pre-school and the children engaged in activities around the junior school grounds.

The children were engaged in a variety of play and activities throughout the inspection and the adults consistently used descriptive language around the learning topics that were on display. Children's interests were recognised and responded to as evidenced on written plans, photographs and displays. The adults read stories and sang songs with children multiple times throughout the day. The environment was laid out in clearly defined interest and play areas and was print and label rich which is inviting for children to engage. There was a wide range of materials and resources easily accessible, and children were observed engaging with wooden blocks, magnets, discs, puzzles, matching games, and manipulation equipment. Paint and rice provided for messy and sensory play. There were many natural materials incorporated. The children played outdoors with footballs in the school's astro pitch.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

The following measures were taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children and provide a safe environment, as evidenced by observation of practice, a review of the environment and documentation, and through discussion with staff:

General Safety:

- The entrance to the service was appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- There were restrictors on the windows to prevent children exiting or falling.
- Blind cords were secured.
- White board was securely mounted with cables secured.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Play equipment was in good condition.
- Whole grapes in children's lunchboxes were chopped.

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Infection Control:

- The premises, environment, equipment and materials were clean and maintained in a hygienic condition and updated cleaning sheets were displayed.
- Appropriate handwashing was facilitated through the provision of warm running water, liquid soap and dispensed paper towels.
- The children were supported to wash their hands after outdoor play and before eating.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated their knowledge of children's medical needs and the procedures in place for the administration of medication. Records were available to demonstrate prior parental consent.
- Medication was clearly labelled, within its expiry date, and stored in the original container and out of reach of children.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency escape routes and exits were unobstructed and clearly signposted.
- Staff outlined the procedures to evacuate children in the event of a fire and knew the location of the assembly point, in line with the service's procedures that were on display.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Children were eating perishable items that were stored in school bags in a press instead of being refrigerated in line with national nutritional standards for preschool children. This poses a risk of bacteria multiplying in the food that would subsequently cause a child to become ill.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider stated that sandwiches and perishable lunch supplies are placed in a cold bag in the fridge and yoghurts continue to be refrigerated.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence was submitted and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance identified under regulation 23.

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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 as a first aid responder was available to children at all times. A current certificate of first aid responder (FAR) Training was available for one staff member.

(2)

A suitably equipped first aid box was available.

(a) The first aid box was stored safely in a conspicuous position on a cabinet in the pre-school room.

(b) The first aid box was available to children at all times.

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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) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. Records showed that the firefighting equipment was serviced on 22 September 2025 and that the smoke alarms were serviced on 25 February 2026.
- (4)
- A notice of the evacuation procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location at the exit door of the preschool room.

Non-Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) There was no record available to demonstrate that fire drills were carried out monthly, as required. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on 20 January 2026.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that fire drills occur monthly and that going forward fire drills will be recorded and on display.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence was submitted by the registered provider and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance identified under regulation 26.