

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS058
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Name of Service:	Precious Minds Crèche & Montessori School
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Address of Service:	1 Griffeen Glen Drive, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 YV90
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Name of Registered Provider:	Erica Clancy, Joy Maguire
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/04/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	18
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate - Tusla Child and Family Agency, Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, County Dublin, A96P3Y6
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Geraldine Kavanagh
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

Precious Minds Crèche & Montessori School is privately operated and registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care to children aged 0 to 6 years. The early years' service is located in a purportedly adapted two storey premises and is situated in a residential area of Lucan County Dublin. The service operates Monday to Friday from 07:30 to 18:30.

Care of the children is facilitated in four care rooms. On the ground floor the rooms are named the Baby room catering for children aged (1-2 years) and the Pre Montessori catering for children aged (2-3years). Montessori 1 and 2 rooms were located on the first floor catering for children aged 3-5 years. On the day of inspection Montessori 2 room was closed for Easter. This room caters only for children availing of the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme which operates from 9am to 12pm for 38 weeks. An outdoor play area was available for the children on the premises.

Staffing

In total six adults are employed including the two registered providers. On the day of inspection five adults worked directly with the children including two students who were on work placement. One of the registered providers was present and available to provide additional support as required and to relieve staff for their breaks.

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.

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

9(1)(a), (b), (2) (a)-(d) and (4) Management and Recruitment

11(1), (2), (8)(a) Staffing Levels

15 (1)(a)-(i) Record of a pre-school child

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

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

however, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 16(1)(h) Record in Relation to Pre-school child. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 (1)(a)-(i).

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

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

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

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

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

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
(b) The designated person in charge was present at all times throughout the inspection.

(2) The inspection included a review of files for six staff employed in the service and also included files for two students present on inspection.

(a)(b) Of the sixteen written validated references that were required, eleven were available from a past employer and two were available from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all adults employed in the service. 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 for one adult and was available as on file.

(4) Records were available evidencing that the six adults who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) Two written validated references were not available for one adult. A second written reference available for one adult from a past employer was not validated.

(3) All the procedures specified in paragraph 2 were not completed prior adults being appointed as detailed above under (2)(a).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a), (3) Two written references have been validated. To correct this situation, we will ensure our files are more accessible. The registered providers have implemented a staff induction checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of written validated references submitted.

Summary Comment

Supporting evidence was submitted in line with has been submitted in keeping with the corrective actions stated.

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 eighteen children attending the service being supervised by four adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection.

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

- (1) A sample of ten records were reviewed for children who were attending the service. The records reviewed contained the following information:
- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
 - (b) The date on which the child first attended the service.
 - (c) There was an area on the registration form where the date when a child would cease to attend the service will be recorded.
 - (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service were also available.
 - (e) There was authorisation for the collection of the child.
 - (f) The record available supported the recording of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child.
 - (g) The name and telephone number of each child's medical practitioner was recorded.
 - (h) A record of immunisations received was recorded.
 - (i) There was written consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of an emergency.

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;

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) In the Baby room the arrival times of all children present were not recorded. Four children were present and three children were signed in. In the Pre-Montessori room, one child arrived at 11.10am and was not recorded on the room register until an hour later.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(h) All staff have been retrained in our policy of signing in/out the children in their care in a prompt manner. At our next team meeting the managers will ask staff to sign-off on the information and this will be supplied after June Team Meeting. The managers have re-iterated the importance of timely sign ins and accurate attendance records for Health & Safety/Fire Drill attendance numbers. Staff have been advised they need to stop all activities when children arrive and enter the child's name into the attendance app.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence.

Summary Comment

The corrective actions as stated by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Staff reported the service provides all meals and snacks. The morning snack consisted of sliced banana and brioche and children were also offered crackers. At lunchtime a hot meal of pasta bolognese was served. Bibs were provided for younger children at dinnertime. Children were offered water with their meals and drinking water was accessible to the children throughout the day. Children in the baby room were encouraged to feed themselves and additional support was provided by staff as required. Children were encouraged and observed to use the toilet independently. Younger children's nappies were changed regularly or as needed.

Staff interacted warmly with the children in their care throughout the inspection and were observed supporting children in their play. Children's choices were respected with children being given the opportunity to choose their own activities during free play. Transitions within the service were managed appropriately staff gave children ample notice to tidy up before the next activity and used songs to support this.

Care rooms were arranged into defined areas of interest providing children with the opportunity to play and explore. Play materials were easily accessible from open shelving provided. Suitable rest areas were available in each room to allow children to take a break from activities as required. A separate cot room was provided for the children attending the baby room. In the PreMontessori room suitable low-level beds were provided for children who wanted to sleep. Staff described how they communicate information to parents daily at drop off and collection times. The service also uses an electronic computer application system to share information with parents about their child. This included information relating to diet, sleep and nappy changes.

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 door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The kitchen area and storage facilities were inaccessible to children. Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children. No hazards were identified in the outdoor play area.

Infection Control:

The environment was clean and a record of the cleaning schedule was displayed. Children's bed linen was stored in individual bags and staff reported it is laundered weekly. In the baby room children were supported to wash their hands prior to eating. Children in the Montessori 1 washed their hands independently prior to eating while being supervised by staff.

Administration of Medication:

Staff were familiar with the administration of medication policy. A sample of ten medication records were reviewed. All required details were completed on the form including parental consent, signature of the person who gave the medication and signature of witness.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep logs were maintained for the baby room and the PreMontessori care room. Individual children's observations recorded breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and low-level beds were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs.

Fire Safety:

The fire exits were clearly marked and unobstructed. Staff were familiar with the fire drill procedure.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. In the Baby, PreMontessori and Montessori 1 rooms a trailing flex from an air ventilation system posed a potential tripping hazard.

Infection Control:

2. In the Pre-Montessori room the nappy changing practice observed was inadequate for infection control purposes as evidenced by;
 - Staff did not wash hands and clean the nappy changing mat between changing all the children's nappies.
 - Children's hands were not washed after their nappy was changed.
 - There was no nappy changing policy displayed. The nappy changing policy did not include all required steps for infection control. Staff were not familiar with the nappy changing policy when spoken to.
3. In the PreMontessori room the pedal bin provided was broken and staff were observed lifting the lid of the bin posing an infection control risk.
4. In the PreMontessori room children's hands were not washed prior to eating and staff were observed not to wash their hands after cleaning up a child's secretions.

Safe Sleep:

5. Staff were not recording the temperature of the rooms where children slept.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Flexes have been hooked to the wall behind the Dyson Air Purifiers so that the flex is no longer trailing on the ground.

Infection Control:

2. All Staff Members will be reinstructed on our nappy changing policy and the importance of correct hand washing procedures. The staff member on duty that day has completed a nappy changing course to refresh her knowledge of correct procedure and infection control for the importance of implementing handwashing for children and staff. Nappy Changing procedure has been replaced in view of changing area for staff reference. It has been replaced in full view. Spot Checks are being carried out regularly by supervisors to ensure all staff members are following procedures correctly.
3. All Bins in the facility will be safety checked for pedal covers and have been replaced.
4. Team Member in on Duty that day has been requested to complete an Infection Control Course. Spot checks will be carried out for (3.,4.,5) by management.

Safe Sleep:

5. New thermometers have been bought for the sleep rooms. These are plugged in to the wall and have constant power source and are visible to staff checking the sleeping children. A computer management tutorial will be viewed at the next meeting to instruction the team on the accurate way to record temperature checks.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Written and photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

Written and photographic evidence.

Safe Sleep:

Written and photo evidence.

Summary Comment

The actions as stated by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance. The Regulatory requirement has been met.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The insurance certificate was available to demonstrate adequate insurance was provided and valid until the 27 March 2026.