

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS093
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Little Saints Creche
-------------------------	----------------------

Address of Service:	Unit 4 Eaton House, Main Street, Rathcoole, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	D24 DF88
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Gwen Woods Hughes
-------------------------------------	-------------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	04/09/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	86	PM	64
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Rachael Duff
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
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

Little Saints Creche is a full day care service located in an urban area in Rathcoole, South Co. Dublin. Care and education are provided to children aged between six months and six years. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 07:00 and 18:15 hours, including a sessional service from 9:00am to 12:00pm for 38 weeks of the year. A school age service is also provided. The service operates from a purpose built two storey premises which located on the main street in Rathcoole. Children are allocated to one of eight care rooms dependant on their age and stage of development. An outdoor play space is located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

The service currently employs twenty-six staff members which includes the registered provider, a centre manager, and a cook. On the day of inspection, twenty-four staff members were present including the registered provider.

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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

Regulation 28 - Insurance

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby One Room, the Baby Two Room, the Wobbler Room, the Toddler Room, and the ECCE Three 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 inspectors wish 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

(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

(2)
Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that five adults had commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 10th June 2024. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these five adults as detailed below. Regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for all twenty-six adults employed to work in the service.

(a) (b) There were two references each available for the five adults which had been appropriately verified.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the twenty-six adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all twenty-six adults employed.

(d) Four of the new employees required International Police vetting, the required documentation was available for the four adults.

(4) Each of the five adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children throughout the inspection. There were twenty adults allocated to work directly with eighty-six children during the inspection. The centre manager and registered provider were available to assist in the care rooms where required.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

- (1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-*
- (a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

Compliance Information

The inspectors observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported during the inspection. The indoor areas were laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for bags and coats with the children's names and photographs attached. There were some interest areas including construction areas, dress up, and home corners. Play materials were visible and accessible to the children on open, low-level shelves. Areas with soft seating were available for children to rest or take a break from activities. Inspectors observed children engaging in various activities including sensory and imaginative play.

The older children were supported to be independent with their personal care. They used the toilet as needed with staff reminding them to wash their hands afterwards, they were encouraged to clean their faces after eating and tidy up following meals and play. Younger children had their nappies changed at regular intervals and as required. Regular meals and snacks were offered to the children, including a hot dinner, which were provided by the service daily. Children attending older preschool rooms took a morning snack in from home. Adults sat with the children when they were eating and engaged in conversation. Drinks of water were available in the care rooms. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children throughout the inspection and engaging with them positively.

Staff were observed responding promptly to younger children's cues for care and provided comfort to children who became upset. Babies were placed to sleep in line with individual care needs and older children were provided with the opportunity to sleep at a designated time. Children were made comfortable for sleep, with staff removing their shoes and outer clothing and providing soothers and comforters to those who used them. The environments were calm and conducive to sleep, with staff sitting with the children, speaking quietly and soothing them as needed. The children were all provided with the opportunity for outdoor play.

Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. Staff reported they use an interactive messaging application to communicate with the children's parents daily, in addition to engaging with them at drop-off/collection. They informed inspectors that formal opportunities are provided to meet with parents/guardians if required.

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 inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The

entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. The care rooms and outdoor play area were observed to be safe and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

Safe Sleep:

Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance and detailed the safe sleep procedures in place in the service during discussions with the inspectors. Sleep logs were maintained in the rooms where children slept, and individual children's observations recorded room temperature, 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. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were maintained at the required temperature ranges.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A child was observed eating whole grapes in the ECCE 3 room which were taken in from home, posing a risk of choking to the child. It is acknowledged that the grapes were cut up when the inspector brought this to a staff members attention.

Infection Control:

2. Perishable items contained in children's lunches which had been taken in from home were not refrigerated prior to consumption, posing a risk of gastrointestinal illness.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An email was sent to all parents advising grapes are not allowed in children's lunchboxes. All staff were made aware of the dangers around grapes and other types of food that cause risk to choking to a small child. All lunch boxes are to be checked before children eat.

Infection Control:

2. A new fridge was purchased, and all Lunch boxes are placed into the fridge as soon as the children come in. All staff and parents are aware that the fridge in the staff room is only for children's Lunch boxes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

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)

An adult trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.

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)

(a) A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill had taken place in August 2025.

(b) There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system had been serviced within the required timeframes.

(4)
The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidence that the service was adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children registered to attend.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) Some areas of the service were found not to be cleaned, maintained and repaired as required as follows:
- The Two fabric chairs in the ECCE 3 room and one chair in the Baby 1 room were heavily worn and stained.
 - Areas of the skirting boards and windowsills in the Toddler 2 room had chipped and worn away, exposing the porous wood beneath which could not be effectively cleaned.
 - The paint on the walls in the Toddler 2 room was heavily chipped and flaking away in parts.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider submitted the following response:

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
- The two children's chairs and the armchair in the Baby room were cleaned and are now washed down each Friday. New blankets were purchased for the armchair. Staff will add the chairs to their weekly cleaning sheet so they will now be cleaned each Friday.

- The children's playhouse and the windowsill were painted. Staff will make management aware when painting needs to be completed in all rooms. The painter is due to return to complete painting over the bank holiday when no children are present.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.