

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS150
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Name of Service:	St Marks Preschool
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Address of Service:	St. Mark's House, Cookstown Lane, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D24 PK6P
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Name of Registered Provider:	James Morrissey
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	19/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	47	PM	16
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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
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	n/a
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Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

St Marks Preschool is a community-based service which provides part time and sessional care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 14:00, Monday to Friday. A sessional service is provided from 10:00 to 13:00.

The service is located in a purposely adapted two storey premises in a residential, urban area in Tallaght, Dublin 24. There are four care rooms in the service. Room 1 and Room 2 are located on the ground floor. Room 3 is located on the first floor return and Room 4 is located on the first floor.

A fully enclosed outdoor play area is available to the front and side of the premises. The service also has access to a sports hall at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 13 staff members. There were 10 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection who were supported by the manager.

The registered provider does not work directly with the children and was not present during 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

- 9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,
- 11 (1),(2),(4), (8)(a) – Staffing levels,
- 15 (1)– Record of a pre-school child,
- 19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,
- 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:

- 19 (1)(a)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,
- 23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Room 1 and Room 3.

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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*

(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*

(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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises throughout the inspection.

(2)

The inspection focused on the recruitment records for two staff employed since the last inspection on 11 April 2024 and one external contractor. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed in respect of these 3 adults, the registered provider and 11 other adults who work in the service. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(a)(b)

Of the six validated, written references that were required, one was available from a past employer and three were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 15 adults. 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 for one adult. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(4)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a)(b)

Through a review of documentation and discussion with the person in charge it was evident that the registered provider had not taken consideration of the following.

- The registered provider had not sourced a past employer reference for one new staff member from their most recent employer.
- There were no references available in respect of one external contractor employed to work in the service.
- There was no evidence to demonstrate that two written references in respect of one adult had been validated by the registered provider.

(3)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to some adults commencing employment in the service, as detailed above under regulation 9(2).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)

- There are 4 references on file, of these 4 I can confirm that the two most recent references are the ones validated.
- References are now available for external drama teacher.
- I will make sure to validate the most recent references going forward.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(3)

I have now checked and validated references. I will be sure to check references prior to staff member starting position in future.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted 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 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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

(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,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)(4)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for part time services and services that contemporaneously provide a sessional and part time care service were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 47 children attending the service being supervised by 10 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

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

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.*

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1)

A sample of 10 records were available and were reviewed which demonstrated that a record was available in writing which contained the information required in (a) to (e) above.

Non-Compliance Information

(f)

Nine records did not contain 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)

Eight records did not contain the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner.

(h)

Six records did not contain a record of immunisations, if any, received by the child.

(i)

All 10 records reviewed did not have written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of a child in the event of a medical emergency. This non-compliance was present on the previous inspection on 11 April 2024. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(f)

I have reached out to our parents on the online application via the instant message feature. I asked that parents take the time over easter break to log in and update their child's information regarding health, allergies and emergency contact details. I also called our online application customer care team and explained how the application is not performing great for us in this area, and they will be bringing it to their next feedback meeting. I will continue to check that the child record forms are completed and aim to have this section filled in face to face with parents at my initial registration meeting.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

(g)

I have asked parents to fill in the doctor details section on our child record form over easter break, explain the importance of having this information on file in the case of emergency. I am happy to say to date a majority of Parents did comply over easter break and I will continue to check the remaining forms to have them completed, and keep them all up to date going forward.

(h)

I got on to our forms section on the online application, and I am creating a new form that can be used to obtain permission from Parents in the event of a medical emergency. This form will be signed digitally by Parents All forms will need to be signed by Parents prior to child's start date in September. I will make this a mandatory field for parents while filling in their child's details.

(i)

I have sent my medical emergency form to parents to be signed, and I am creating a new template form we can use going forward on the online application.

I am working with child paths to add the medical emergency form to the forms section within the child record section to be signed by parents going forward.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted 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. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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

(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)(a)(b)

Staff reported that all meals are provided by the service. Meals were provided regularly and lunch took place at 11:15. Children were offered a choice of different foods for their meal and staff were observed supporting children as needed. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers and staff during their meal. Lunch time was observed to be a relaxed, sociable occasion with children given time to finish their meal. Drinks were accessible to the children throughout the day, and all children had a drink with their meal.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. Children were observed handing out drinks, placemats, plates and knives for lunch and cleaning up after their lunch and play. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff were observed to use gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour management policy. Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection time and through an online application.

The care rooms provided a range of developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children and were adequately resourced with a variety of materials providing children with the freedom to play and explore.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Designated areas of interest included small world toys, construction toys, jigsaws, art areas, rest areas with books and home corners. Family photos, birthday displays and children's artwork were displayed in the care rooms. The environments were laid out to support the children's independence. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables, chairs and coat hooks were available in the care rooms.

There were two outdoor play areas on the premises. One at the front of the building with grass surfacing and one at the side of the building with astro turf surfacing. The service also has use of an indoor hall at the rear of the premises. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play areas. Children from Room 1 were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors and children from Room 3 were provided with the opportunity to play in the indoor hall during the inspection.

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.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- All blind cords were secured.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet.
- 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Fire Safety:

2. Monthly fire drills were not completed. The last recorded fire drill was on 18 November 2025. Failure to carry out monthly fire drills may impede the safe evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire on the premises. This non-compliance was present on previous inspections in 2024, 2021 and 2019. The corrective and preventive actions previously submitted by the registered provider did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. I have created a file for the adult and updated vetting has been requested. I will keep this updated file with my staff files and be mindful to keep it up to date.

Fire Safety:

2. I have great awareness that our fire drills are not compliant. I will be appointing 2 fire marshals who will lead the fire drills monthly, and where there is difficulty accessing our assembly point, we will do less formal fire drills per class. The focus will be that the requirements are met with ease and safely for all staff and children. I endeavour to have a compliant fire safety record on our next compliance visit.
I have appointed two staff as fire marshals. They will lead the fire drills going forward. I will be responsible and make sure these drills do take place in the timeframe required (every 4 weeks) our team have also discussed the option of other staff members implementing a drill, and it was agreed should have more involvement to keep them flowing and on time. This helps spread responsibility across the team.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Fire Safety:

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

Summary Comment

1. Evidence of an application for one adult for Garda vetting was reviewed, however a copy of the completed Garda vetting has not been submitted for this adult to the inspector to date. The registered provider is required to furnish the required documentation to the Inspectorate upon receipt. The non-compliance in relation to regulation 23 Point 1 remains outstanding.
2. The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next 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 for the most recent fire drill which was carried out on 18 November 2025.
- (b)
- The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 06 March 2026, and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 23 December 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.