

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS205
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Name of Service:	Meadows Preschool
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Address of Service:	17 Monksfield Meadows, Clondalkin, Dublin 22,
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Eircode:	D22 XW72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jennifer Gilbert
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Meadows Preschool is located in a residential area in Clondalkin Dublin 22 and operates from two adjoining rooms on the ground floor of a private residence. The service is registered to provide sessional care for children aged 2 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme offering sessions from 9am to 12pm and 1pm to 4pm daily. The premises includes ground floor access to sanitary facilities and an outdoor area to the rear.

Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children in the service and employs two staff members one of which is employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM). On the day of inspection two staff were present working directly with the children. The registered provider was not present and the deputy person in charge facilitated 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, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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

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

11(1), (3), Staffing Levels

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

23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

25 First Aid

26 Fire Safety Measures

28 Insurance

An additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 (d) Premises. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 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.

(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 deputy person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure. Conversation with staff demonstrated an awareness of their individual roles and responsibilities.

(2) Conversation with the deputy person in charge confirmed that there are three adults currently employed in the service including the registered provider. One adult was new to the service since the last inspection on 27 April 2023.

Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of one adult as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) relating to Garda Vetting was reviewed for all three adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) (b) There were two references available for one staff member which had been appropriately verified.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for three adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
- (d) No international police vetting required.

(3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the adult commencing employment in the service.

(4) Documentation was available to show that one adult who work directly with the children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were two adults available to the fifteen children present.
- (3) The required adult to child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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

Children's independence was supported throughout the morning, for example, they were encouraged to use the toilet independently, manage their own belongings and attend to personal care needs with appropriate guidance from staff. A healthy eating policy was in place and evident through the healthy lunches children brought from home, reflecting good communication with families regarding healthy choices. Children's individual water bottles were stored in their bags on low level hooks and children were observed to have access to them when required. A library area with a child size sofa was available to provide a space to rest if needed. During the inspection one child was observed resting contently on the sofa, displaying their emotional and physical need for rest was provided for.

Interactions with children were observed to be warm, responsive and sensitive. Positive behaviour was actively promoted and children were supported to find constructive solutions during moments of challenge. Individual inclusion plans were available describing interventions required by the staff to meet the children's needs. Staff demonstrated strong relationships with children and used spontaneous moments during play to extend children's learning. For example, one child used connecting tubes to create a structure and proceeded to look through it at the staff member. The staff member responded by asking the child what colours they could see, encouraging the development of the child's observations skills and language. Staff actively listened to children's conversations and used these moments to offer praise and positive reinforcement. For example, children were observed cooperatively playing with playdough sharing tools and materials and using positive language with one another such as "caring is sharing". Staff immediately acknowledged and praised this behaviour reinforcing positive social interactions.

The indoor environment offered a variety of materials to support children's learning and development and children were observed to be engaged in their play throughout the inspection. These included items such as, a library with a selection of books supporting early literacy, small world materials such as animals and dolls supported imaginative play, a mark making area encouraged prewriting skills, a well-equipped home corner

fostered imaginative play and social interaction. Small groups of children were observed engaging in role play in the home corner that mirrored real life experiences. Construction materials and jigsaws promoted problem solving and logical thinking, while latch board puzzles were available to support hand eye coordination. Child size furniture was available to support children’s comfort and independence. The presence of a family wall with velcro backed photos provided children with a sense of identity and belonging. Children were observed to recognise and engage with their family photos throughout the day. The outdoor area had a bark covered surface and contained play equipment such as diggers, cars, a rocker, picnic benches, balls, a blackboard, a basketball hoop and small animals all of which provided opportunities for active and social play.

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 into the service was appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- Toys and play equipment used by the children were observed to be safe for the age group, maintained and in good condition.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored in a high press out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- All perishable food brought by the children from home for morning snack time was observed to be stored in a fridge reducing the risk of bacteria multiplying.
- Pedal operated bins were in use in the sanitary areas and the outdoor area to support effective hygiene practices.
- Liquid soap, warm water and single use paper towels were available at wash hand basins.
- Children were supported to wash their hands after toileting, following play and before mealtimes.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff clearly demonstrated knowledge of the services procedure to safely administer medication to a child and documentation was available for use should it be required in line with the services administration of medication policy.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

Some areas of the care room were observed to be heavily soiled and required a deep clean to restore appropriate hygiene standards. Staff stated that cleaning schedules were not in place and advised that floors and tables were cleaned down following each session. The following areas were identified as requiring attention:

- Skirting boards were soiled with a visible build-up of dirt and dust.
- The kitchen units and fridge had a noticeable build-up of residue.
- An internal door had an accumulation of dirt and sticky residue on the surface.
- Children's fabric seating was visibly soiled and stained.

Ineffective cleaning of children's care rooms can pose a risk of cross contamination and illness to a child.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

The registered provider has carried out a deep clean of the service and painted the care rooms. Going forward a deep clean of the care rooms to include floors, doors, sofas, tables, chairs, equipment and toys will be completed every Friday. Additionally, tables, floors, skirting boards, dado rails and the fridge will be cleaned daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Digital images submitted

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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) There was evidence to show that two adults hold certification in First Aid Responder training, one adult was available for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in a press in the care room.
 - (b) The first aid box was observed to be easily available to the adults caring for the children attending the service.

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 took place on 13 May 2025. In addition, there was evidence to show that practice fire drills are carried out during the morning and afternoon sessions.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment on the premises was available. The maintenance records confirmed the most recent service was carried out on 16 September 2024.
- (4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children in attendance. The insurance certificate was valid until 27 March 2026.

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

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The fence to the rear of the outdoor play area was damaged presenting a potential safety hazard for children. One panel of the fence detached from the supporting posts, creating a gap large enough for a child to pass through. Beyond this opening is an area containing dense shrubbery, scattered wooden debris and a broken slide.
 2. An area of damaged plaster was observed exposing a hole in the wall next to the skirting board in the care room. The plaster had uneven edges and a visible build-up of dirt and dust.

Ineffective maintenance of the premises creates hazards and can compromise the safety and wellbeing of children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The fence to the rear of the outdoor play area has been repaired and the panel has been secured to the post.
 2. The damaged plaster has been repaired.
- A thorough examination of all areas in the garden will take place every Monday to ensure the area is safe.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Digital images of repaired fence submitted.
2. No evidence of repairs to damaged plaster submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 has been adequately addressed. The repairs to the damaged plaster will be reviewed on the next inspection.