

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY025

Name of Service: Best Start Creche / Afterschool

Address of Service: 26 Killester Park, Killester, Dublin 5, Co. Dublin

Eircode: D05 FH50

Name of Registered Provider: Lina Ivanovaite

Service type: Full Day, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 17/06/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	33	PM	19

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate,
Child and Family Agency,
Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park,
Dublin 15

Inspection undertaken by: Á Dunne

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.

Description of service

Best Start Creche & Afterschool is a full day care service located in a residential area in Dublin 5. The service operates from a purpose-built building to the side of a residential property and is open from 8.00am-5:30pm Monday to Friday. There are four care rooms within the service, namely; Room 1 , Room 2, Room 3 and the Garden room.

The service offers care and education to children aged 1-6 years and participates in the early childhood care and education (ECCE) programme. A registered school aged service is also offered. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the rear of the premises

Staffing

The service employs 10 staff including the registered provider, assistant manager, seven childcare staff, one of whom was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model and a cook. The registered provider and assistant manager were not assigned to a care room but available to assist staff and children if required .

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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 29.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

Regulation 11 Staffing levels was assessed across all rooms.

The scope of the inspection included three rooms – Room2, Room 3, the Garden Room and it did not include Room 1.

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 registered provider, assistant manager, 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.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(2) The files of the registered provider, assistant manager, seven staff and a cook were reviewed.

(a) Seven written and validated references were available from a past employer.

(b) Thirteen written and validated references were available from a source other than past employer

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for ten adults. 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 available for five adults who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that ten adults who worked directly with 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.

(7)(a) Documentary evidence available demonstrated that new staff receive induction training and six-month appraisal and along with bimonthly staff meetings, all staff members receive training and regular support and supervision reviews where they review their practice in line with the service policy. Then review meetings with management to include their knowledge of their role, training needs, policy review along with health and safety are completed.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. On the morning of the inspection there were 6 adults working directly with 33 children aged between 1 to 6 years and in the afternoon of the inspection there were 5 adults working with 19 children aged from 1 to 6 years.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection, as follows:

- In Room 1, there were 8 children aged 3 years to 4 years being cared for by 2 adults, in the morning and in the afternoon.
- In Room 2, there were 11 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults in the morning and 8 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.
- In Room 3, there were 4 children aged 1 years to 2 years 6 months being cared for by 1 adult in the morning and 3 children aged 1 years to 2 years 6 months being cared for by 1 adult in the afternoon.

- In the Garden Room, there were 10 children aged 4 years to 5 years being cared for by 1 adult in the morning.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured, and the weekly staff roster demonstrated that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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

Basic Needs:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals and a hot meal to the children. The inspector observed morning snack at 10.15am of rice cakes with ham and butter, banana, apples and raisins, a hot meal served at 12.00pm in the care rooms of coconut chicken and rice and at 3.00 pm, an afternoon snack of yogurt, cereal and blueberries was served. Children attending the ECCE scheme had an option to bring their own lunch or eat the food of the service.
- Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to have respectful and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.
- Communication with parents is through a message application on a phone and on the day of inspection a graduation ceremony for children with parents attending demonstrated a strong parent/ service relationship.

Physical and Material Environment

- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Toys and materials were clearly labelled and displayed on shelving which allowed children to access them freely. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them.
- Child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- Cosy areas were present in all rooms offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed, the surface was soft artificial ground with areas of wooden decking. There were two areas with overhead shelters to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing bar, mud kitchens, sandpits, water play, ride in cars, seesaw and wigwam playhouse.

Programme of Activities:

- At sleep time, children who did not sleep were provided with outdoor play activities while other children settled for sleep time.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspector, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- No trailing flexes were observed in the service.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Blind cords for blinds on windows were observed to be secure.
- Room temperatures were kept between the recommended 18 °C to 22°C.

- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean and suitable for use by the children.

Infection Control:

- At all handwashing facilities for hand hygiene in the service thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste were available.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes.
- During sleep time, low stackable beds and contour floor beds were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs for children under two years of age, were facilitated with access to contour floor beds for sleep and the sleep needs of children over two years of age were met through the provision of low stackable beds.
- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on the electronic application for colour, breathing, position while children slept.
- While children slept, the temperature of room 2 and room 3 recorded on the electronic application and by the inspector were maintained between the recommended temperature of 18-22 °C for children over the age of one year.
- Sleep risk assessments signed by parents were available for the three children under two years of age who were observed to sleep on contour floor beds, in line with sleep guidelines issued by Tusla, in September 2023.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

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 service provided evidence that two adults trained in First Aid Response were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the Garden room and in the kitchen of 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 firefighting 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 of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 30 May 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced 6 June 2025 and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 21 August 2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

The service was observed to be

- (b) safe and secure
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated in each care room
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.