

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Tg76bTUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY197
-------------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	St. Lawrence Creche
-------------------------	---------------------

Address of Service:	Methodist Church (The Blue Door), St Lawrence Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	D03 H9K3
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Pamela Smith
-------------------------------------	--------------

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

Date of Inspection:	25/02/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	34	PM	22
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	L Jameson and C Harte
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

St. Lawrence Creche is a privately operated service based over two floors in purposely adapted rooms in the Methodist church on St. Lawrence Road. The service offers full day care to children aged 0-6 years from 7:30am to 6pm, Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). There are 3 care rooms in the service namely the Wobbler room which caters for children aged 1 -2 years, Pre-Montessori room aged 2 -3years, and the Montessori room aged 3 - 5years. The service also has a kitchen, cot room and the necessary sanitary facilities. An enclosed outdoor area is located to the side of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service and employs 14 adults, including 2 deputy persons in charge and 11 early years educators who work directly with the children attending the service and a chef. On the day of inspection, the registered provider, 10 staff members and a student were present.

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.

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*
- (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 needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. A review of the staff roster showed that a designated person is rostered to be on the premises at all times during the opening hours of the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) A review of the roster and conversation with the management showed that the registered provider currently employs 14 adults. The full staff files of 14 adults employed to work in the service and the registered provider were reviewed along with the full file of a student.
- (a) There were twenty-one written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were eleven written and validated references available from a source other than a previous employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 16 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. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for 10 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) Fourteen staff members 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 or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs

Non-Compliance Information

(3) A review of documentation showed that the registered provider did not verify a reference belonging to one staff member prior to their employment commencing. This posed a potential risk to safeguarding children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(3) Management have reviewed the Recruitment Policy to ensure correct procedures are followed in relation to obtaining validation of references for all employees prior to commencing employment. All relevant documentation will be obtained and verified in a timely manner before new staff commence working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(3) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 9.

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) There were a sufficient number of staff members working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

There were eight staff members working with thirty-four children in the morning and six staff members working with twenty-two children in the afternoon.

(2) The adult child ratios were 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-

(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)(b) The following practices were observed on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:

- The children were supported to follow their own interests. Decision making was encouraged by staff who were observed to actively supervise and guide the children throughout the day. A child who required additional support was observed to be encouraged by staff members to explore their environment, supported during activities and transitions and given freedom of choice.
- Staff members used positive and respectful language on the day of inspection. Staff members were observed to positively reinforce the children's achievements with praise and recognition.
- Appropriate and respectful nappy changing procedures were observed. Staff members in the Wobbler room used gentle tones to invite the children to have their nappies changed, supporting the children's choices and child led practices in the service. The children who were toilet trained used the toilet independently with discreet supervision provided by staff members. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently when required.
- Staff members were responsive to and knowledgeable about the children's individual needs, likes and dislikes, demonstrating strong relationships and familiarity between staff members and the children.
- The service used an electronic application to communicate with parents and update them on their child's day including activities, mealtimes and toileting. In addition, staff members were observed to chat informally with parents at collection time.
- Through discussion with staff members and a review of the weekly menu, it was stated that the children received five meals per day which included one hot meal. All meals were prepared onsite by the chef. Staff members also reported alternative meals are available if required. In the Montessori room, the children were observed to enjoy their morning snack at a time that they chose, further supporting the children's individual needs.
- Children's individual water beakers were accessible to them throughout the day.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed:

- Child sized furniture was available in the service. Children in the Pre Montessori room and Montessori room were observed to use the low-level tables and chairs for a range of tabletop activities.
- Equipment and materials in the care rooms were in good working order. Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, blocks, magnets, cars, animals, dolls, sensory activities, a selection of books and Montessori materials were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play.
- The children had access to art and craft materials, for example, on the day of inspection, children in the Montessori room were observed to take part in a painting activity.
- Toys and materials were grouped into defined interest areas with adequate props and supporting equipment to support engaging spontaneous play experiences.
- Cosy areas were available in the care rooms to provide children a comfortable place to rest or engage in quiet activities.
- The outdoor play area provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor and imaginative play.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Children in the Wobbler room did not have access to table and chairs throughout the day except at mealtimes. This restricted the children's opportunities to sit down and take part in tabletop activities if they so wished.
2. Resources in the Wobbler room were inaccessible to the children, limiting their choice and opportunities for play. Evidenced by the following:
 - A selection of foam blocks was stored out of reach on top of a shelving unit.
 - Dolls and soft plush toys were blocked by a plastic room divider.
 - A low-level table was blocking access to cars and trucks.

- Sensory play materials were stored in a bowl on a high shelf.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The children's chairs were brought back into the Wobbler room and remain there all day. Management spoke with the staff in the Wobbler room about the importance of giving the children the choice to sit down or stand during activities.
2. Materials and equipment have been moved to lower shelving, ensuring they are accessible to the children and used daily. The table has been moved to allow children to move freely around it. A review of the timetable will ensure daily use of the toys.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
2. Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 21.

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 leading into the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A buzzer system was in place which was managed and monitored by staff members.
- A visitor book was available at the front door. The inspectors were asked to sign in and sign out at their arrival to and departure from the service.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Radiators were mounted high on the walls, preventing the risk of injury to a child by a heat source.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary areas were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, before eating and after activities and toileting.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available in the care rooms and sanitary areas to ensure the hygienic disposal of contaminated materials.
- Staff members were observed to wear gloves and aprons during nappy changing, and effective handwashing practices were observed afterwards.

Administration of Medication:

- Detailed, written medical care plans were available for children who may require emergency medication to be administered. Visual displays were also observed within the care rooms which detailed supporting information in the event of a child requiring emergency medication to be administered.
- Emergency and antifebrile medication was stored in its original packaging with clear labelling and out of the reach of children. Medication was not observed to be administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to physically check and record the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years old in care rooms. This was evidenced by the following.
 - The cot room temperature in the Wobbler room measured 18.8°C at 12:53pm.
 - The temperature in the Pre Montessori room where children were sleeping measured 18.9°C at 12:57pm.
- Cellular blankets were used.
- The blinds were closed and white noise played in the background, creating a relaxing environment for sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection. Emergency evacuation routes were displayed throughout the service and staff members were familiar with procedures in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. A trailing flex in the cot room was observed to be within reach of a sleeping child. This posed a potential risk to the safety of the child.
3. Two chalkboards in the outdoor play area were observed to have chipped surfaces and damaged edges, posing a potential risk of injury.

Infection Control:

4. Hand washing was not observed after a staff member in the Wobbler room wiped a child's nose, posing a risk of cross contamination.
5. A shelving unit in the Wobbler room was observed to have a chipped surface. This posed an infection control risk as effective cleaning practices cannot be carried out.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Updated Garda vetting has been obtained for one staff member. Management will complete regular checks for Garda vetting expiry dates.
2. The trailing flex in the sleep room has been removed and stored higher up on the wall out of reach of any child. The monitor has been moved to a spot above the door and the flex tidied into the door frame. The devices and wires have been stored in a secure way.
3. The chalkboards have been removed from the wall in the outdoor play area. Management and staff reviewed the Risk Assessment Policies to ensure a safe environment for children and staff.

Infection Control:

4. Management reviewed the protocol for infection control and the importance of hand washing throughout the day, especially after wiping a child's nose, with all staff. Management discussed infection control and reviewed the policy with all staff.

- The damaged shelf was removed from the Wobbler room and replaced. Management reviewed the risk assessment policies and the protocol around identifying damaged equipment and furniture with staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
- Photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.
- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Infection Control:

- Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.
- Documentation and photographic evidence in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for four staff members and their scheduled attendance in the service's staff roster.

- (2)
- (a) The first aid box available in the service was suitably equipped and stored in a conspicuous location on the premises.
 - (b) First aid boxes were available for the children in attendance in the event of an emergency.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 March 2025.