

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY219
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Rookery Creche and Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	60 Howth Road, Clontarf, Dublin 3,
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D03 E427
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Nicky Crowe
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/08/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	27	PM	26
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L.A Webster
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

The Rookery Creche and Montessori is a privately owned service which operates from a converted two storey residential property in North Dublin. The service provides full day care to children aged from 0-6 years and is registered for the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Programme. It operates from 8:15am-17:45pm Monday to Friday. The service is comprised of four care rooms including three on the ground floor and one on the first floor. Additionally, there is an office, staff room, sanitary facilities and two enclosed outdoor areas at the right-hand side and left-hand side of the building.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs nine staff and works within the service. This includes a person in charge and eight childcare staff. On the day of inspection there were eight staff present working directly with the children. Shortly after the inspection commenced, the registered provider arrived and remained at the service to help facilitate the inspection process.

### 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.

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, 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

*(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.*

*(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 person in charge was present within the service when the inspector arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was further evidenced through discussion with staff.
- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with the person in charge showed that there are currently nine staff employed by the registered provider to work within the service. The files and qualifications of two new staff who had commenced employment following the previous inspection on the 09 January 2023 were reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures were reviewed for all staff that are currently employed within the service.
- (a) There were four written and validated references available-from past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all nine staff members. 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 two adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that all nine adults who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed of equivalence by the minister

### 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) On the day of inspection, there were 27 children being cared for by 8 adults in the morning and 26 children being cared for by 8 adults in the afternoon. Additionally, the registered provider was available to provide support in the care rooms as needed.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of the children within the rooms.

### 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)

#### Basic Needs:

- The atmosphere in the care rooms were calm and relaxed, with children comfortably moving around their environments.
- The activities that were provided to the children were developmentally age and stage appropriate. This included fine and gross activities to support children's cognitive thinking.

- Throughout the inspection, children were observed to be visibly happy and content in both the indoor and outdoor environments.
- Mealtime was observed to be warm and social interaction with staff.
- Individually labelled beakers of water were available to the children at all times.
- Children were given ample time to eat and digest their food and staff reiterated that children could avail of additional food should they wish-This was further evidenced through discussion with staff when reiterating their knowledge of pre-verbal children and identifying their cues of seeking additional food.
- The children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection and staff ensured appropriate sun wear including hats and suncream was applied due to the warm weather on the day.
- Garden timetables were observed to be displayed to ensure that children get adequate times to enjoy the outdoor spaces.
- Transitions from the outdoor area into the care rooms were observed to be a pleasant experience for the children.
- Displays such as 'Family Walls' 'Birthday Walls' and children's artwork were displayed within the care rooms, and it was evident that the service emphasised the children's sense of belonging and identity.
- Transitions were observed to be smooth and considerate during nappy changing times. Children were gently directed to the changing area and the staff ensured to explain to the children what was happening. Nappy changes were observed to be in line with the procedures visible on the wall and staff ensured that these interactions were meaningful and created a strong sense of safety for the children.

### **Supporting Relationships:**

- It was observed that staff spoke to each other in a respectful and professional manner, demonstrating positive interactions to the children.
- Staff ensured to consistently interact with the children through play, music and outdoor time in a fun and caring manner.
- It was evident that children felt comfortable with staff and confident that their voices were heard when asking questions or telling stories.

### **Equipment and Materials:**

- There were people friendly plants located within the environment that gives a sense of nature and growth to the children. This was evident through discussion with staff and how the children plant and nurture their own flowers at the service.

- The layout of the care rooms facilitated choice and spontaneous play opportunities for the children. Toys and equipment were accessible through low level shelving and were visibly labelled.
- The care rooms were thoughtfully designed, with designated play areas for the children to engage with.
- There was an adequate number of tables and chairs to accommodate the developmental age and stage of children within the care rooms.

### 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 to the service was appropriately secured upon the inspector's arrival. The service entrance operated through a buzzer system that allowed entry into the main premises, and a second door was securely locked to prevent children from leaving the service unsupervised and restrict any unauthorised access to the service. Additionally, the outdoor areas were securely fenced and gated.
- The care rooms were in good condition, with no visible hazards or trailing wires observed.
- Blind cords were securely attached to the wall and out of reach of children.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and locked away out of reach of children.
- Shelving units were firmly anchored to the wall to ensure stability and safety.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- In discussion with staff, the service operates a nut free zone. Additionally, staff reiterated their knowledge and understanding of beaded jewellery and ensured that it would be immediately removed if observed within the service.
- Up to date indoor and outdoor risk assessments were available and displayed within the care rooms to ensure children's safety.

##### Infection Control:

- Upon arrival, it was observed that the service was clean and hygienic and up to date cleaning schedules were available and observed within the care rooms and sanitary facilities.

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and wall mounted paper towels were available for appropriate hand washing practices. Both staff and children were observed to show familiarity with routine handwashing after nappy changing, snack time and after free play
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the appropriate disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order.
- An ambient temperature of 16-22°C was maintained in the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
- Within the sanitary room, children had individually labelled storage areas for their nappies, creams and wipes to avoid any cross contamination.
- Children’s soothers were stored in their own individually labelled containers and in discussion with staff, they ensured that the soothers are frequently sanitised and checked for wear and tear.
- Upon observation, it was evident that children had individual bed linen that was clean and in good condition. This was further reinforced by staff, who reiterated their laundry routines.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of inspection. Through discussion, staff were familiar with the practices required for the administration of medication to children attending the service.
- Observation showed that medication was stored safely and out of reach of children.
- In discussion with staff, it was evident that they were aware of medical care plans for children and where the emergency medication is stored. In addition to this, staff were aware of the procedures to take in relation to potential anaphylaxis and the administering of emergency treatment if the event occurred

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were noted to be aware of safe sleep practices and children were observed to be monitored while sleeping every 10 minutes. Staff ensured to document this through electronic format highlighting the children’s breathing, position, and colour of each child.
- Cots were positioned at 50cms apart, cots and mattresses were observed to be in good condition.
- Appropriate bedding in line with Tusla’s guidance on safe sleep was provided to children who were under two years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained for sleeping children under one years of age.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over two years of age.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the inspection

- All fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helped ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency

### 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 person in charge was trained in First Aid Response (FAR), expiry date of February 2026 and was immediately available to the children attending the service. Additionally, a review of the staff roster indicated that a person qualified in First Aid Responder (FAR) was rostered to be on the premises and available to the children during the operating hours of the service on the day of inspection.
- (2) (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, and unobstructed if needed to access quickly.
- (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available at all times to 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 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) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on the 27 July 2025.

(b) A record was available detailing the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarm systems in the premises.

- Records demonstrate that the firefighting equipment had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place on the 06 August 2025
- Records demonstrate that the smoke alarms have been serviced on a quarterly bases with the last service taking place on the 18 June 2025.

(4) A visual notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was consistently displayed around the service.

### 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 pre-school service was adequately insured, with an expiry date of March 2026.