

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY233
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Name of Service:	Westwood Childcare
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Address of Service:	Westwood Club, Clontarf Road, Dublin 3, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Polley
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Service type:	Full Day, Drop-In
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Date of Inspection:	23/04/2024
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Date 2 of Inspection:	24/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	108	PM	99
Day 2	AM	108	PM	No.

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:	E Hosford and Á Dunne
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.
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Description of service

Westwood Childcare is a private service located in an urban area on the north side of Dublin city. The service provides full day care services to children aged from 2 months to 5 years and operates from 7:30am to 6:30pm Monday to Friday. A drop-in service is also provided to children of parents attending the leisure facility.

The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

This purpose-built service occupies two floors in a sports and leisure facility and has seven care rooms, namely, Nursery and Nursery Senior rooms on the ground floor and the Wobbler room, Toddler room, Playschool room, Bright Stars Junior, and Bright Stars Senior care rooms on the first floor. Two separate sleep rooms with a total of 29 cots are available on the ground floor and the first floor. A new outdoor area to the side of the building and an indoor play area on the ground floor are available to the children.

Staffing

The service employs a total of 50 staff to include the registered provider, designated person in charge, deputy designated person, and 47 childcare staff. On the first day of the inspection there were 38 staff working with 108 children and on the second day of the inspection there were 41 staff and two students working with 108 children. The registered provider does not work within the service and the designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge are not assigned to a care room but are available to assist 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

The unannounced inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)(8)(a),

Regulation 16 Record in relation to preschool service (h)(i)(j)(k),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of child (1)(a),

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child and,

Regulation 27 Supervision.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations:

Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre School children,

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child and

Regulation 27 Supervision.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included rooms Nursery and Nursery Senior rooms, the Wobbler room, Playschool room, Bright Stars Junior, and Bright Stars Senior rooms and did not include the Toddler room.

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels was assessed across all the rooms.

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.

Additional Information

An Immediate Action notice was issued to the service on the 24 Apr 2024 in relation to the following:

Regulation 23- Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

- The outdoor area was not adequately secured to prevent a child from exiting the area unsupervised or to prevent an unauthorised adult from entering.

On the 25 April 2024 the registered provider responded to the immediate action notice with the measures implemented within the service. Please see details in the body of the inspection report.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the designated person in charge, deputy 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

(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.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(2) The following was reviewed:

- Nineteen full files of adults who were new to the service since the last inspection held on the 13 April 2024.
- Fifty Garda Vetting declarations

The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a)(b) Thirty-eight validated written references were available from recent past employers or a source other than a past employer for the 19 full files reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 50 declarations reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that 19 adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(4) Nineteen staff members employed within the service had evidence to confirm they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications along with three staff members whose documentation was not available on the last inspection.

(6A) Two staff members were employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

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) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 38 staff working with 108 children on the first day of inspection and 41 staff working the 108 children on the second day of inspection.

(2) It was observed that the correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection as the table below demonstrates.

Room and age profile of children	Day 1		Day 2
	AM Staff: Children	PM Staff: Children	AM Staff: Children
Nursery (0-2 years)	4:6	4:6	4:5
Nursery Senior	5:10	4:10	6:11

(1-2 years)			
Wobbler room (1-2 years)	5:14	5:12	5:13
Toddler (2-3 years)	6:16	6:16	6:15
Playschool (2-3 years)	6:20	6:20	7:21
Bright Stars Junior (3-4 years)	6:21	4:20	7:20
Bright Stars Senior (3-5 years)	6:21	4:15	6:23
Total	38:108	33:99	41:108

** Calculated as per Schedule 6 Adult: Child Ratios Part 1.

(8)(a) The staff roster available demonstrated that two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

- (h) The arrival and departure time of each child in the Nursery room, Nursery Senior room, Wobbler room, Playschool room, Bright Stars Junior room and Bright Stars Senior room were recorded in the services electronic application.
- (i) The staff roster available adequately reflected the staff present on the two days of inspection.
- (k) On review of 15 accident and incident records it was observed that all forms had the information regarding the accident or incident completed.

Non-Compliance Information

- (j) On review of 15 administration of medication records the following was observed.
- Three administrations of medication did not include the signature of the parent to confirm that they were aware of the administration.
 - One form included two medications, one of which was a prescribed medication. This increased the potential risk of a medication administration error.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(j) In response to the non-compliances the service has stated that room leaders will ensure that parent's signature will be signed on medical form following medicine administration before the medical form is filed in the child's file. Each room leader spoke with their teams re the importance of parent's signature after medicine administration. Management met with staff to discuss the use of medical forms. Staff will use only one medical form per child per medication administered, to avoid the potential risk of medication administration error. Management will ensure that medical forms are signed by parents and one medical form for each medication will be used for each child if a different medication is administered. Room leaders will show management/supervisors in the office the completed forms before filing in the children's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

(j) Corrective action has addressed non-compliances.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified through the corrective and preventive actions taken.

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

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

- The adults spoke to the children in a kind manner and speech and language skills were supported through conversation and songs. The children were provided with regular opportunities to have meals and snacks during the day. Parents provided healthy food which was in keeping with the service healthy eating policy. Food eaten consisted of a breakfast if needed on arrival, a morning snack from 9:30- 10:30am of crackers, yogurts, and fruit. A hot meal either from home or an outside catering company at 11:30am followed by a snack at 2pm. A larger snack was available at 4-4:30pm. Food was available between set mealtimes if a child was hungry, and water was available throughout the day and stored in an accessible position for the children to access.
- Staff were observed caring for the children in a calm and friendly manner with attention given to their individual needs and preferences. Suitable outdoor clothing was provided for each child when going outside and assistance was given to the children when required.
- Each child was provided with a basket that was identified by their photograph. Children accessed the baskets independently and were familiar with their personal belongings when getting ready for the garden and soft play centre.
- The transitions between activities were observed to be calm and organised. Additional staff were available to offer children small group activities or one to one support if required.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff in the care rooms engaged with parents daily through verbal conversation at drop off, collection and by an electronic application. The staff updated parents on their child's meals, snacks, sleeping, nappy changes and activities undertaken.
- The children were familiar with the daily routine of the service with consistent and scheduled activities planned and undertaken by the staff.
- Staff encouraged the children to interact with each other in a calm and friendly manner while emphasising turn taking and sharing.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. The children in the Wobbler room were not provided with outdoor play daily. On discussion with staff, they confirmed that children had outdoor play on alternative days while spending time in the indoor play centre on other days. Children require outdoor play daily.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. In response the service has stated that management met with wobbler room re the importance of outdoor time for the children. Wobbler team updated their garden time and will now share garden time with nursery and will prioritise garden play over soft play centre. Wobbler team will liaise with other staff members should they need help going to and from the garden. Management will ensure that each class has outdoor garden time daily. Supervisors will check that wobbler children are in the garden at their allocated time slot, alternately wobbler team will liaise with other classes to swap times if needs be, but each child will have outdoor garden time.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Wobbler garden routine with garden slot.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified through the corrective and preventive actions taken.

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

- Areas within the Playschool and Bright Stars Senior room were equipped with areas of interest to reflect the interests of the children. For example, the home area had play kitchens, pots, pans, and dishes, a shop area with play food and cash register, a construction area with work bench, shapes, blocks, connectors, nuts, and bolts.
- Tables and chairs were available in the care rooms between meals to enable the children to participate in tabletop activities such as jigsaws and puzzles.
- Areas within the rooms were available to enable the children to rest and take a break if required. They consisted of soft matting, cushions, and books.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Areas within the service were observed to be poorly equipped with materials and activities to engage and enable the children to explore. For example.
 - Cause and effect toys in the Wobbler room were without working batteries. This reduced the enjoyment and engagement for the children.
 - In the Bright Stars Junior room, the art and craft area had no equipment to enable the children to actively engage in artwork and creative activities.
 - Playhouses and a play kitchen were available in the outdoor area but there was no supporting equipment to enhance the games and activities for the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. To address the non-compliances the service has stated the following;
 - Batteries were replaced in all musical/sounding toys, any toys that didn't work when batteries were replaced were removed from the rooms and discarded.
 - Supervisors spoke with bright stars junior team about children having access to art supplies in the art area. Brights junior team acknowledged this and restocked the art area with supplies so children can access this when they chose to.

- Playhouses and play kitchen in the garden area were replenished with appropriate equipment to support children’s learning and play while using these play areas. Supervisors and staff will make sure the equipment is there in the correct areas before children are taking to the garden area. Staff will check all equipment in their rooms and garden area regularly to ensure areas are replenished at all times and also check garden playhouses for relevant items before taking children down to play. This will also be added to the supervisors’ daily checks.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic supporting evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances through corrective and preventive actions taken.

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:

- During the movement of children from the care room to the outdoor area and soft play centre each child wore a coloured bib to reflect the room they were from to ensure that staff within the sports and leisure complex could identify the children and ensure their safety. Children’s arrival and departure from the service was recorded in an electronic application.
- Areas within the care rooms were observed to be suitable and appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basins in the sanitary facilities in the service. Children were observed to wash their hands before meals, after using the sanitary facilities and after outdoor play.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers after cleaning and sterilising.
- The service was observed to be clean with cleaning schedules in place within the care rooms and sanitary facilities.
- Nappy changing was carried out according to the service policy and best practice guidelines.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under the age of two years were facilitated to sleep in standard cots that were observed to be suitable with washable/ wipeable covers with each child being provided with their own sheet and cellular blanket.
- Staff maintained ten-minute sleep checks on sleeping children to include each child's colour, breathing and position. The temperature of the downstairs cot room was recorded as 20.6°C at 11:33am and the upstairs cot room was 19.3°C at 12:06pm. This is within the recommended temperature of 16-22°C for children while they sleep.

Administration of Medication:

- Information and the plan of care for a child that required emergency medication was clearly displayed to enable staff to adequately identify any symptoms and administer the appropriate medication. The child's medication was stored in an easily accessible position within the care room and out of the children's reach. The information regarding the child's name, date of birth and expiration of the medication was clearly displayed.

Outing:

- Documentation was available to demonstrate that outings to the local public park are undertaken in accordance with the service policy. Risk assessments were available for previous outings undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The entrance into the outdoor area was not secured to prevent the unsupervised exit of a child and the unauthorised entrance of an adult. It is acknowledged that the service reduced the potential risk during the inspection by installing a temporary fence in front of the gate.

2. The movement of children from the care rooms to the outdoor area and soft play centre was not reflected in the service written records or electronic application. This reduced the effective evacuation of children in the event of an emergency. For example. At 3:15pm on the first day of inspection six children went on an outdoor walk. Their movement from the care room was not reflected in the electronic application.
3. The surface cover of a bench in the outdoor area was damaged with frayed material accessible to the children. This increased the potential risk of injury to a child.

Infection Control:

4. A bin used for disposal of aprons and paper towels in the main sanitary area was not pedal operated. As a result, staff and children were required to touch the bin lid. This increased the potential risk of cross infection.
5. Soft matting used in the Bright Stars Junior room was observed to be damaged and torn. This reduced the effective cleaning of the area following use by the children and increased the potential risk of cross infection.

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. In response to the immediate action notice issued to the service during the inspection and the service submitted corrective and preventive actions stated that the designated person in charge responded with the measures implemented within the service to reduce the risk. They were;
 - A temporary fence has been installed in front of the garden gate along with two childcare supervisors who will be present in the garden when there are children there. They will locate themselves in front of the gate to prevent children accessing the gate. Their purpose in the garden is supervise the gate which will prevent children exiting the garden and unauthorized adults entering the area.
 - A meeting was held with the maintenance team and steel work contractor and a new solid steel gate is being custom made to replace the existing wooden gate.
 - In addition, the service will install a keypad on the external wall of the new gate structure and there will be a push button inside the garden to release the door to open.

2. In response the service has purchased 11 new electronic devices for the classes. Classes will now have two tablets each so when there is movement throughout the building and to the park, one tablet will stay in the room and the other tablet will move with the staff and children as they move to other parts of the building. Staff will ensure they take one of the tablets with them once they leave the room with a group of children.
3. To address the non-compliance the bench in the garden with damaged covering was removed, children will have small stools and the padded area to sit down when needed. Staff will remove any broken or damaged equipment from the garden, to avoid potential risk of injury to children.

Infection Control:

4. Following the inspection the bin with touch lid was removed. A new foot pedal bin was purchased and replaced in the nappy changing area. Management will ensure at all times that bin disposal units are foot pedalled and not touch ones to prevent potential risk of cross infection.
5. To address the non-compliance the mat in the Bright Stars juniors' room was removed and replaced. Staff will ensure that once equipment/furniture is damaged that it will be removed and replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1-3. Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

4-5. Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances through corrective and preventive actions taken.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

During the time inspectors spent in the care rooms the children were supervised while undertaking activities, in the outdoor area and while using the sanitary facilities.