

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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Eircode:	D03 T6T3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Karen Polley
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Service type:	Full Day, Drop-In
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Dates of Inspection:	21/05/2025
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Date 2 of Inspection:	22/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	104	PM	99
Day 2	AM	105	PM	Not applicable

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.
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford and Á Dunne
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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.

The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service also provides a service to school age children.

This purpose-built service occupies two floors in a sports and leisure facility and has seven care rooms, namely, Nursery and Wobbler room, on the ground floor and the Toddler room, Playschool 1 and Playschool 2 rooms, Pre School 1 and Pre School 2 rooms. Two separate sleep rooms with a total of 27 cots are available one on the ground floor and one on the first floor. An 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 49 staff to include the registered provider, designated person in charge, deputy designated person in charge, 3 childcare supervisors and 43 childcare staff, one of whom only works with the school age 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 9, 11, 16, 19, 21, 23, 25 and 26.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulations 16, 19, 21 and 23:

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Nursery room, Wobbler, Toddler, Playschool 1 and 2 and Pre School 2, and did not include Pre School 1 room.

Regulation 11 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.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the designated person in charge, deputy designated staff and children who were present on the two days 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.

Compliance Information

(2) The files of the 12 new staff members who have been employed in the service since the last inspection in April 2024 were reviewed along with Garda Vetting disclosures for 36 staff members whose file was reviewed on the last inspection.

(a) The following references were available from a past employer.

- Two validated written references for 10 staff members.
- One validated written reference for 1 staff member.

(b) The following references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- Two validated written references for 1 staff member.
- One validated written reference for 1 staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 48 staff employed in the service. 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 11 adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from 13 states were available for inspection.

(4) Twelve new 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.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained as the table below demonstrates.

Room Name	Age profile	Day 1 of inspection	Day 2 of inspection
Nursery	0-1 years	3 adults caring for 6 children	2 adults caring for 5 children
Wobblers	1-2 years	4 adults caring for 11 children	5 adults caring for 12 children
Toddlers	1-3 years	5 adults caring for 11 children	5 adults caring for 13 children
Playschool 1	1-3 years	5 adults caring for 14 children	5 adults caring for 13 children
Playschool 2	2-4 years	6 adults caring for 19 children	8 adults caring for 20 children
Pre School 1	3-5 years	5 adults caring for 24 children	6 adults caring for 23 children
Pre School 2	3-5 years	7 adults caring for 19 children	6 adults caring for 19 children
Total	0-6 years	35 adults caring for 104 children	37 adults caring for 105 children

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed 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;*

to inspection on the premises by an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) The arrival and departure time of each child in the six care rooms inspected were recorded in the service electronic application and reflective of the children present in the care rooms.
- (i) A staff roster was available for inspection.
- (j) On review of 30 administration of medication records across 6 care rooms it was observed that the required information and details were documented by staff and parents.

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:

- Children attending the service were spoken to in a kind manner with staff supporting their and speech and language skills through songs, stories and rhymes. 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 9:30am- 10:30am of crackers, yogurts, and fruit. A hot meal either from home or an outside catering company was provided at 11:30am followed by a snack at 2pm. A larger snack was available at 4.00pm- 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 cubby box 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.

Physical Environment:

- The care rooms were bright and spacious which enabled the children to move and explore the areas of interest and low-level shelving units independently. The furniture provided for meals and tabletop activities were appropriate for the children attending.
- Throughout the rooms natural, open ended play materials were available to the children such as play kitchens, dolls, dress up, activity areas with cars, trucks, blocks and bricks. These materials promoted the use of all the children's senses and can provoke exploration, curiosity and creativity.
- The children engaged in outdoor play during the morning and afternoon while under the supervision of adults. The sheltered area was equipped with balls, goalposts, playhouses, sit on bouncer toys, rode on cars, balance bikes, scooters and seesaws. The children engaged in physical and risky play experiences which can promote dispositions such as curiosity and exploration and fundamental movement skills such as running and balance.

Supporting Relationships:

- Each child's identity and belonging were reinforced within the service with the use of the children's pictures along with their extended family. This can provide familiarity and comfort to children.

- The staff in each care room updated parents on their child's meals, snacks, sleeping, nappy changes and activities undertaken through verbal conversation at drop off and collection and by an electronic application throughout the day.
- 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.
- Staff worked well together in providing care to the children which enabled smooth transitions between activities such as mealtimes, sleep and getting ready for outdoor 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 premises and outdoor play area was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. Access to the service was monitored by reception staff and electronic gates. Entry into the care rooms was secured with electronic keypads. Access to the garden area was secured with a tall metal gate and electronic keypad. Children were supervised while in the care rooms and outdoor garden and play centre by staff who were observed completing regular head counts. All the locks, handles and keypads were positioned out of children's reach.
- During the movement of children from their 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.
- Low level windows and all blind cords in the care rooms were secured.
- Areas within the care rooms were observed to be suitable and appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.

Infection Control:

- Adequate hand washing facilities were available in the sanitary facilities used by the children, these included thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap, paper towels and pedal operated bins. Children were observed to wash their hands before lunch and after using the toilet.
- Children's perishable food from home was refrigerated on arrival to the service and staff were observed cleaning the tables before and after lunch.
- The service was observed to be clean and well maintained with cleaning schedules in operation within the care room and sanitary facility. The care room and sanitary facility had open windows to extract any stale air.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled containers after cleaning and sterilising.
- 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 19°C at 1.05pm and the upstairs cot room was 19.9°C at 12.24pm. This is within the recommended temperature of 16 °C to 22°C for children aged from 0- 3 years while they slept.

Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were completed in the service and all fire equipment to include fire extinguishers and smoke detectors were serviced yearly.
- The designated fire exit was illuminated and clear of any obstructions throughout the inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that 12 staff members were trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) certification and were available to the children throughout the day.

(2)

(a) and (b) First aid boxes were available in the service and suitably equipped and accessible to the adults responsible for 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 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 the 15 May 2025.

(b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. Fire extinguishers were serviced on the 15 October 2024 and smoke alarms were serviced on the 16 December 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.