

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY261
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Name of Service:	Whitefriars Childcare Ltd
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Address of Service:	Alexandra Walk, Whitefriar Street, Dublin 8.
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Eircode:	D08 W9WF
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Name of Registered Provider:	Donna Farrell
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	16/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin
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
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Description of service

Whitefriars Childcare is a full day care service located in Dublin city centre. The service is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 40 children aged 0 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday. The service is one of two services operated locally by the registered provider.

Whitefriars Childcare operates from the ground and basement levels of an apartment building and has four care rooms. The Baby Room (6 to 18 months old), sanitary accommodation, kitchen and office are on ground floor level. There are sleeping facilities provided in the Baby Room. On the basement level is the Wobbler Room (1 to 2 years), Toddler Room (2 to 3 years) and the Montessori-Room (3 to 5 years) which are conjoined rooms. There is further sanitary accommodation on this level. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is available on the ground floor, and an enclosed sheltered area directly accessible from the Wobbler Room on the basement floor.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work in the service and employs 14 staff including the person in charge, deputy person in charge, a supervisor, 9 childcare staff and two ancillary staff; a cook and a cleaner.

On the unannounced arrival of the inspector the supervisor, seven childcare staff and one student who supports the care rooms in a supernumerary capacity were present. Shortly after the inspection began the person in charge from the other service operated by the registered provider arrived to provide support to the service. The person in charge and the deputy person in charge both arrived shortly after 11am and remained on site to help facilitate the inspection process. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection.

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

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Record of a Preschool Child Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) and (3)(c)

Record in Relation to Preschool Service Regulation 16 (i) and (k).

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

Regulation 22 Food.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

Regulation 29 Premises (b), (c) and (d).

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Baby room and the Montessori room.

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

16 June 2026

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider in relation to a concern identified under Regulation 23, Safeguarding the Health, Welfare and Development of child. A response which outlined a plan which mitigated the risk was received on 17 June 2025. Further details are available under Regulation 23.

An additional immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider on 17 June 2025 in relation to concerns under Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment. A response which adequately addressed the concern was received on 18 June 2025. Further details are available under Regulation 9.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the management team, staff, student 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 two named persons to deputise if required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge, deputy person in charge or the supervisor were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge confirmed there are currently 14 adults in employed in the service. The full files of 3 new staff who had commenced employment following the previous inspection on the 11 November 2024 were reviewed.
- (a) There were three written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for two adults. 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 three adults had lived in a state other than Ireland for more than six consecutive months as an adult. International police vetting from the relevant countries were available for two adults.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a) (b)
- One written and validated reference was not available for one adult.
 - Two written and validated references were not available for one adult. It is acknowledged that this adult does not work directly with the children and usually works outside the operational hours of the service. However, this adult was observed to be present on the day of the inspection. A similar non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection in November 2024, and the preventive action had not been sustained.
 - (c) There was no Garda vetting disclosure available for one adult who was present on the day of inspection and had access to the children. An immediate action notice was issued to the registered provider. It is

acknowledged that this adult does not work directly with the children and usually works outside the operational hours of the service. However, this adult was observed to be present on the day of inspection.

- (d) Documentary evidence showed that one adult had lived in two different jurisdictions other than Ireland for more than six months as an adult. International police vetting was not available for one of the two jurisdictions. It is acknowledged that this adult does not work directly with the children and usually works outside the operational hours of the service. However, this adult was observed to be present on the day of the inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a) (b) The outstanding reference was sourced and validated for one adult, and the registered provider has offered assurances that the second adults' normal working hours are outside the operational hours of the service. The registered provider will ensure all references are received and validated before employment.
- (c) Garda vetting was received. The registered provider ensures that this adults' normal working hours are outside the operational hours of the service.
- (d) The registered provider ensures that this adults' normal working hours are outside the operational hours of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2)(a)(b) Evidence of reference, agreement on working hours.
- (2)(c) Evidence of vetting, agreement on working hours.
- (2)(d) Agreement on working hours.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted which address the non-compliances identified 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 eight staff including the supervisor caring for 30 children present on the morning of the inspection. There were eight staff including the supervisor caring for 30 children present on the afternoon of the inspection. In addition, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to provide support where required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of 10 children's registration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a)-(i) was maintained for each child.
- (3) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspection team were available for review.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualification, and experience of the person in charge and adults working were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
- (c) Details of the adult to child ratios in the service were displayed on the wall in each care room.

- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service was displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
 - (e) The facilities available were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention of parents/guardians.
 - (f) The opening hours and fees were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for the attention parents/guardians.
 - (g) The required policies, procedures and statements of the service were available on request.
 - (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child were available in each care room.
 - (i) Details of staff rosters were available for review and was given to the inspector on their arrival to the service.
 - (j) A sample of ten medication administration records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that all the required information was filled out correctly.
 - (k) A sample of 10 accident and incident records were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that all the required information was filled out correctly.
- (3) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were provided.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that there was a variety of nourishing foods available at regular times. This promoted good health, growth and evidenced by the following:

- Food was freshly prepared on site by the service.
- There was a selection of healthy breakfast cereals available for the children to choose between 8am to 9am. This was followed by a snack of toast and fruit between 9am and 10am.
- The service also provided a hot meal option and different dietary requirements were catered for example; dinner consisted of a vegetarian dish of pasta with sauce and were served at 11.30am and an alternative option of plain pasta and cheese was available.
- Children were observed to be given extra portions at various snack and mealtimes.
- Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- For afternoon snack time, a selection of chopped up fruit and yoghurt were served and at 4pm a selection of sandwiches was offered to the children.
- Staff discussed how the services healthy food policy and weekly menu are shared with parents in advance.

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:

- Blind cords were secured safely and out of reach of the children.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach to the children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- The kitchen was not accessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed hand paper handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Foot operated pedal bins were available for the disposal of contaminated items.
- Individual bed linen was used for the sleeping children and staff were familiar with the laundry schedule.
- 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.
- Windows in the care rooms were observed to be open which allowed for fresh circulation of air and reduced the risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

- Outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Children under one years of age were provided with a cot for sleeping.
- Appropriate bedding in line with Tusla's guidance on safe sleep was provided to children who were under 2 years of age.
- Children over 2 years of age were provided with an individual sleep mat.
- Children were monitored while sleeping at intervals of 10 minutes or less and staff recorded the breathing, position, and colour of each child at each check.

Fire Safety:

- Staff ensured the details of each child's attendance was recorded accurately and 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.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was no documentation available in a care room detailing important information on the care, supervision and strategies required regarding a child who had additional care needs to ensure that the child's safety and welfare was maintained. It is acknowledged that an individual care plan was shown to the inspector by management. However, this care plan needs to be updated regularly targeting the individual needs of the child, and the information should be readily available to the staff in the care room in order to provide and plan for children's safe care and development. A similar non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection in November 2024, and the preventive action had not been sustained.

Infection Control:

2. Effective hand washing practices were not observed to support appropriate control of cross-infection. The following was observed:
 - Children in the baby room were observed to have their hands wiped with baby wipes before mealtimes. This does not support adequate hygiene. Children should be facilitated to wash their hands under thermostatically controlled running water, with liquid soap and paper hand towels provided in line with HSPC guidance in relation to infection control protection measures.
 - There was no hand washing completed after one of the three nappy changes observed.

Safe Sleep:

3. The registered provider did not ensure that an ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained for sleeping children under one year of age and an ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one year of age in the care rooms. This was evidenced by the following.
 - The baby room was recorded at 25.6°C at 12.29pm while 1 child under 1 year of age and 3 children under 18 months of age were sleeping. An immediate action notice was issued and a response which mitigated the risk was received on 17 June 2025.
 - In addition, the temperature in the toddler room was recorded at 24.4°C while five children aged 2 to 3 years of age slept at 1.39pm.

- It is acknowledged that staff in both rooms took measures to reduce temperatures including opening windows, putting ion fans, removing heavy outer clothing from the children and carrying out more frequent sleep checks. However, the sleep room temperatures remained above the required room temperatures for sleeping children in both the baby room and toddler room.
- 4. A child in the Montessori room was observed to be asleep in the cosy corner from 1.50pm to 2.51pm. During this time staff did not carry out regular 10 minutes sleep checks including checks on the child's breathing, position, and colour. This is at variance with the service 'Safe Sleep' policy which states "children will always be provided with suitable sleeping facilities away from the play areas and staff will conduct 10-minute sleep checks recoding the position of the child, skin colour of the child and any changes of breathing.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. An up-to-date care plan was developed. The registered provider will ensure that care plans will be maintained up to date.

Infection Control:

2. Staff were updated on hygiene procedures, and the infection control policy was shared with staff. The service will ensure staff are aware of policy and procedures in relation to handwashing.

Safe Sleep:

3. Air-cooler machines have been purchased for the Baby, Toddler and Montessori rooms, with an additional machine or the Wobbler room under order. The machines will be timed to cool the rooms prior to the children arriving. A canopy has been installed outside the Baby room window to provide shade and reduce heat in the room. A risk assessment has been developed to assess temperatures and a new thermometer to gauge temperatures throughout the day. The safe sleep policy was shared with staff.
4. Staff have been updated on the safe sleep policy and the requirement for appropriate sleep facilities and sleep checks.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Evidence of care plan.

Infection Control:

2. Staff sign-off on handwashing policy.

Safe Sleep:

3. Photographic evidence, risk assessment, staff sign off on policy.
4. Staff sign off on policy.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

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.*
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-*
- (c) an authorised person.*
- (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 record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 2 May 2025.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in October 2024. Smoke alarms were serviced on 9 June 2025.
- (2) (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway and care rooms in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had adequate insurance for the number of children in attendance. The insurance certificate is valid until 27 March 2026.

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*

Compliance Information

- (b) When the inspector arrived unannounced at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was fully enclosed, and the gate was secured by an electronic lock which was managed by staff.
- (d) The premises was observed to be cleaned and well maintained.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c) The registered provider did not ensure that an ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in three of the care room where children were playing. Evidenced by the following.
 - The Baby room temperature was recorded at 23.6°C at 10.30am.
 - The Toddler room temperature was recorded at 23.8°C at 11.52am.
 - The Montessori room temperature was recorded at 23.5°C at 1.59pm.
 It is acknowledged that it was a warm day and staff opened windows, turned on fans, removed heavy outer clothing from the children and ensured children stayed hydrated. This non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection in November 2024, and the preventive action had not been sustained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c) Air-cooler machines have been purchased for the Baby, Toddler and Montessori rooms, with an additional machine or the Wobbler room under order. The machines will be timed to cool the rooms prior to the children arriving in the morning. A canopy has been installed outside the Baby room window to provide shade and reduce heat in the room. A risk assessment has been developed to assess temperatures and a new thermometer to gauge temperatures throughout the day.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence, risk assessment

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29(c) has been addressed.