

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY303
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Name of Service:	Christchurch Creche & Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Dublin City Council, Ground Floor Dublin Council Civic Offices, Wood Quay, Dublin 8, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D08 RF3F
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Name of Registered Provider:	Esther Brennan
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	22/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM	30
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson
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.

Description of service

Christchurch Creche and Montessori is a full day care service located in Dublin city centre and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 44 children aged 0 to 5 years Monday to Friday. Christchurch Creche have recently moved to their current renovated single storey premises. Facilities available include the Baby room (0 to 18 months old), Toddler room (1 and a half years - 2 and a half years old) and the Montessori room (2 years and a half years - 5 years old). There is a cot room located off the Baby room, with nappy changing facilities located off the main hallway between the Baby and Toddler Room. Further sanitary facilities for staff and children, the kitchen and an office are located off the hallway. There is a fully enclosed outdoor area located to front of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently ten staff employed by the service including the registered provider, eight childcare staff who work directly with the children and a kitchen staff member who is available to provide cover in the rooms where needed. Present on the day of the inspection was the registered provider, seven childcare staff, a kitchen staff member and an adult who is contracted to provide security on the premises on a daily basis.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 define the duty of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of children and to comply with these regulations. This Act also gives Tusla the authority to assess compliance with the regulations. The purpose of regulation in relation to early years services is to ensure that the care, safety, and well-being of children attending such services is upheld. Inspections of early years services are planned based on the following:

- Previous inspection history
- Any information received in relation to the service

The findings on inspection are based on:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation
- Direct observation
- Discussion with relevant staff

This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(2) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1)(j)(k) Records in relation to Children
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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 registered provider on the 22 November 2023 in respect of Regulation 23, as a general safety issue was identified during the inspection. A response which addressed this risk was received on the 23 November 2023. Please see details in the relevant regulation of the report.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

(c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, which was displayed on a poster in the hallway.

Nine full files were reviewed, including the eight staff and the contract worker, along with garda vetting for a further two staff members. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (2)
- (a)(b) Twelve validated written references were available from recent past employers and six validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer for the nine adults.
- (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eleven adults.
- (d) Seven adults who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (4) A review of the files of eight staff who worked directly with children attending the service found they held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.
- (7)(c) The registered provider reported they have engaged an external company to support the service in meeting the requirements of the regulations.

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 an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were eight staff available to the 32 children.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Seven staff were allocated to work directly with the 32 children who were present on the day of the inspection with a breakdown as follows:

- Baby room - 2 adults to 6 children aged between 11 -18 months old.
- Toddler room - 2 adults to 8 children aged between 1-3 years old.
- Montessori room - 3 adults to 18 children aged between 2 years 8 months -5 years old.

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:

(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

The registered provider maintained the following records:

16(1)

(j) Following a review of a sample of ten records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication.

(k) Following a review of a sample of ten records, the registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for accident and incidents.

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) The registered provider ensured each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the daily life of the service by the following examples:

Basic Needs:

- The children were observed to have regular meals and there were water stations in the rooms where children could independently access drinks. The transition to mealtime was observed to be a timely experience in the baby room where children were sat in highchairs for their meal, which were placed in a semi-circle, and staff sat with the children and supported them to self-feed. This facilitated mealtimes as a positive, social experience for young children.
- Nappy changing and toileting were observed to be timely, positive experiences for the children, where staff interacted with the children, telling them they were going to have their nappy changed, and engaging in song and conversation during the nappy change.
- Positives strategies to support behaviour were observed. For example, in the Montessori room, children were given clear instructions on unacceptable behaviour in a respectful and positive way. And in the Toddler room, the transition from sleep time was a slow, positive experience where children were given the time to move from the low beds when they woke at their own pace, thereby allowing them the time to regulate themselves.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff were observed to interact with the children in a warm, responsive manner.
- Engagement with families and parents was facilitated via conversations at drop off and collection. Information on the child's day such as sleep, toileting and play activities the child engaged in on that day was recorded and sent home in a daily record book.
- There was a book in the Baby room where staff logged relevant information to support staff handovers such as who may require additional nappy changes due to nappy rash. This sharing of information assists staff to know the children and provide care to meet their needs.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The furniture in the rooms was suited to the age and stage of the children attending. Toys and equipment were laid out on low, accessible shelving, and were labelled with text and imagery. This facilitated independent decision making in children's play experiences and comfort and predictability in knowing where things go.
- There was a variety of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development and this equipment facilitated a range of play experiences such as language, creative and imaginative play.

- There was images of children and their families displayed throughout the rooms, promoting a sense of welcome and belonging.
- Rooms was spacious, allowing children the freedom to move around and to engage in floor play which promoted physical development and fundamental movement skills.
- There were cosy areas available in the rooms where children could engage in more restful activities.

Programme of Activities:

- Play was the central mode of learning, and there was a weekly plan of activities displayed in the rooms.
- Children were invited to participate in an adult led activity of painting in the Toddler room, an alternative activity or free play was provided for those who chose not to participate. Children engage on a more meaningful level with activities they choose to participate in.
- Circle time and story time was observed in the rooms, with open ended questions and discussion after the story in the Montessori. This type of discussion can promote language development and critical thinking.

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 there was adequate and suitable food and drinks available. For example:

- The service followed a rotating menu plan, and the documentary evidence available showed there was a varied selection of food available.
- Food offered throughout the day included breakfast on arrival, a hot meal served between 11.10am and 11.30am, tea at 2.15pm and a snack at 4.00pm. On the day of the inspection the children were offered a selection of cereals for breakfast, and a stew with minced beef, carrots, turnips, parsnips and courgette for lunch served with mashed potato.
- The age and stage of development of the children was considered when preparing the lunch. The food was mashed to a texture suited to the age of the children in the baby room and the children in the Montessori room were given the option of pasta or potato with their meal.
- Drinking water was freely available in the care rooms throughout the day and at mealtimes.

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

The service had the following measures in place to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- Entry to the service was monitored and managed by a person contracted for this purpose and the external gate and main door was secured by an electronic door release system to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- Radiators throughout the premises were covered.
- There was a risk assessment checklist displayed in the premises where the rooms and outdoor area were checked for hazards.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed.
- All cleaning agents and sharp equipment were stored out of reach of the children in locked presses or on high shelves.
- The kitchen, staff toilets and storage room were inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.
- Windows within reach of children were fitted with restrictors and all blind cords were secured.
- Finger protectors were fitted on doors throughout the premises where required.

Infection Control:

- The premises appeared to be in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Individual, labelled cups were available in each of the care rooms.
- Childrens bed linen was stored in individual labelled boxes when not in use.
- Appropriate waste disposal systems were in use throughout the premises.

Administration of Medication:

- There were written care-plans available for children who required specific medications and the medication was clearly labelled and stored in a safe place. Staff reported being aware of the procedures to administer the medication.

Safe Sleep:

- There was a sufficient number of appropriate cots available for children under the age of two years and appropriate bed linen was supplied for these children.
- Low beds and cots were placed with an adequate space between them to tend to the care needs of sleeping children.
- The temperature of the rooms while children slept was maintained between 16-20°C, and a log of the temperature of the rooms was maintained.
- A record of checks on sleeping children was maintained, where the children's colour, breathing and position was checked every 10 minutes.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed.
- The procedures to follow in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the premises.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The water temperatures in three wash hand basins exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. This posed a potential scald risk to the children.

The following was recorded by the inspector:

Room	Time	Temperature recorded in °C
Staff sink in Baby Room	11.40am	55.5°C
Staff sink in Toddler room	10.24am	59.9°C
Staff sink in Nappy changing room	10.40am	56.4°C

An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider with regards to this risk on the 22 November 2023. A response which addressed this was received on the 23 November 2023.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

2. Effective handwashing was not consistent across the service. For example:
 - The water in the sinks which staff reported as used for handwashing in the three care rooms was cold and did not have a supply of thermostatically controlled warm water. This reduced effective handwashing.
 - A child was observed not to have their hands washed after nappy changing. This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.
3. There was not appropriate hand drying available in the following areas in the service:

- The roll of paper towel in the nappy changing room was not hygienically dispensed and required repeated handling.
- The dispenser in the sanitary accommodation was not working effectively, and the roll of paper towel available was not hygienically dispensed and required repeated handling.
- There was no visible means of hand drying by the adult sink in the Montessori room.

This increased the potential risk of cross contamination.

Fire Safety:

4. The details of the attendance of a child in the Baby Room was not accurately recorded in the attendance book. Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The management company of the property was information of the water temperatures on the day of the inspection, and a plumber was engaged the following day to adjust the water temperatures. The water temperatures in the three sinks were recorded at the lowered temperatures of 43°C on the 23 November 2023.

A preventative thermostat seal was installed.

Infection Control:

2. A Warm water system for hand washing has been provided by the management company of the property. Staff have been retrained in hand washing procedures.
3. The Hand drying towels have been placed in a hand towel dispenser to prevent any risk of cross contamination infection in the Nappy changing Area, Sanitary accommodation & Montessori Room.

Fire Safety:

4. The arrival of the Preschool Inspector and a baby to the room coincided, and the staff at that moment got distracted. The child was signed in a little later. A risk assessment was completed, and additional training given to staff around this incident & maintaining normal practices during an unannounced inspection.

Accurate attendance logs are maintained.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Email of confirmation of plumber attending the service.

Infection Control:

2. No evidence submitted.
3. No evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

4. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

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

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-
(a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and
(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) a review of the service roster showed that at least one of the four staff members trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.