

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY337
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Name of Service:	St. Audoen's Pre-school
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Address of Service:	Cook St, Merchants Quay, Dublin 8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eilish Meagher
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/09/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
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Inspection undertaken by:	C Kerrigan
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

St Audoen's Pre-school is a non-for-profit service which is located on the ground floor of St Audoen's National School. The service runs from Monday to Friday between the hours of 9am to 12pm and is involved in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme. The service operates from a large care room with sanitary facilities located off the care room. A large enclosed outdoor area is available for use to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider employs two early years workers to provide direct care to the children in the service. The registered provider works in oversight capacity and is not involved in the direct care of the children.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 (j)(k) Record in relation to pre-school service.

Inspection findings are documented in the inspection report which is first issued in draft format to the service with an opportunity to respond to any findings. Where statutory requirements are identified as not being met, the registered provider must demonstrate how they have rectified the non-compliance and will prevent any non-compliance from re occurring. The Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan (CAPA) will be used to inform decisions about compliance with regulatory requirements. Where the registered provider fails to meet the statutory requirements an escalation process may be commenced.

The inspectorate reserves the right to edit responses received for reasons including clarity, completeness and compliance with administrative and legal processes.

The contents of the report are compiled by the inspectorate body.

Acknowledgments

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(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-

- (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 registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that the person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The files of two adults working within the service were available and reviewed in full on the day of inspection.
- (b) The registered provider ensured that four written and validated references were available from a person other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
 - (c) The registered provider ensured that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the two adults working directly with the children. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under Regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) The registered provider ensured that all references and Garda and Police vetting procedures were completed prior to any adult being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that references and Garda vetting procedures were completed prior to any adult being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that the two adults employed to provide direct care to the children whose records were reviewed, held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Ireland Qualifications Framework.

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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children during the inspection, as there were two staff working with eleven early years children.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the correct adult to child ratio was maintained on the day of Inspection. This was further evidenced in the daily roster.

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.*
- (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)
- (j) A review of one medication administration record was found to be fully completed with all necessary details included.
 - (k) Two accident and incident reports were reviewed and were found to be fully completed with all necessary details included as outlined in the accident and incident policy.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that the relevant records were available within the premises for the Inspector on the day of inspection.

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 that the children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the service in the following ways.

Basic Needs

- The children are provided with a lunch and a snack throughout their time in the service. Lunch and snacks are prepared in the service. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to have a selection of various fruits appropriately cut, sandwiches with meat and cheese. Children drank from their own bottles. Mealtimes were observed to be a social and pleasurable experience with children encouraged to try differing fruit options.
- There was a rest area available in the care room if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.
- A number of children in the care room were observed to be toilet trained. Toileting was undertaken on a scheduled basis and as needed, children were observed to have unrestricted access to the toilet with staff promptly picking up on children's cues for assistance. Adults were observed to promptly pick up on toileting accidents, these were dealt with in a sensitive and supportive way.

Supporting Relationships

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm and respectful manner, sitting with children during play and mealtimes. Involving themselves in children's play experiences when invited. This provides opportunities to support children's learning and development.
- The adults in the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and respectful manner.
- The service operates an open-door policy with parents, with pick up and drop off times being utilised to share information about the child's day, this is further supported through the use of a mobile application which is used to share weekly updates.

Physical Materials and Environment

- The tables and chairs provided were of low level and suitable for the children's age and stage of development. Play materials were accessible and visible to the children on low level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available including mark making, a home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experiences, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate creative play, cars and tracks for transporting and books to facilitate language and early literacy development.

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 main entrance to the service was secure upon the inspectors unannounced arrival at the service. access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered, therefore preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons, this also prevented children from exiting the service unsupervised.
- The ambient room temperature within the service was kept between a recommended 18-22°C.

Infection Control:

- Toilet roll was hygienically stored and in easy reach of the children, preventing cross contamination.
- Perishable food items supplied by the service were refrigerated until required. This reduces the risk of harmful bacterial growth.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were not routinely given within the service however staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required. Temperature reducing medications were safely stored within the service and available for use if required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire escape routes were clear and free from obstruction and easily identifiable in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member; however, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice (EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Notice).
2. An indoor trampoline was observed to be in use within the care room, without specific individual therapeutic guidance this may pose a risk to children's safety.
3. The registered provider did not ensure that materials accessible to children were developmentally suitable for each child attending the sessional service, the following was observed:
 - A child was observed to mouth small smooth plastic shoes. This posed a risk of choking.
 - A child was observed to place hard plastic pliers in and around their eyes. This posed a risk of physical harm to the eye area.

It is acknowledged that the adults present acted immediately to prevent harm, however these items were accessible to the children.
4. Two trailing flexes were observed to be in reach of children. posing a risk of strangulation.

Infection Control:

5. The handwashing practices observed on the day were at variance from the service policy on handwashing, alcohol gel was observed to be used as a substitute to handwashing with warm water and soap. Ineffective handwashing techniques pose a risk to harmful bacterial growth.
6. Pedal bins were not in use within the service. This posed a risk to children being exposed to harmful bacteria.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The registered provider stated that all staff members have completed Garda vetting through Early Childhood Ireland, copies of the updated Garda Vetting have been securely filed in each staff members file. The designated person in charge will review vetting expiry dates and maintain compliance. Staff will be reminded annually of the the vetting review policy during supervision meetings.
2. The registered provider has stated that the trampoline was immediately removed from the care room. It has been replaced with a cosy tent area creating a quiet, safe space for relaxation. All physical equipment is now reviewed monthly to ensure stability and is developmentally appropriate. The designated person in charge will continue to monitor equipment use and storage as part of the daily checklist.

3. The registered provider has stated that the learning environment has been reorganised to ensure all materials accessible to children are age appropriate and safe. Small items and toys with detachable parts have been removed or stored on higher shelves out of children s reach. The dolls house and small accessories have been removed and a mark making easel used to encourage creative, safe learning. The designated person in charge will review all materials monthly to ensure they remain suitable for the children developmental stage and will adapt materials based on observation and developmental needs.
4. The registered provider has stated that the twinkle lights and other electrical items with trailing flexes have been removed from the pre-school environment. Electrical sockets have been replaced with covers. A weekly walk is now carried out by the designated person in charge.

Infection Control:

5. The registered provider has stated that new pedal bins have been purchased and placed in all the required areas. Bins are labelled for segregation and waste. The designated person in charge will monitor hygiene routines daily.
6. The registered provider has stated that staff have been reminded that handwashing with warm water and soap must be used. Alcohol gels is now used as an additional measure not a substitute. There is also a policy confirming that it occurs when needed. It is integrated into our Aistear themes to embed the intentional practices not just as compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Evidence has been submitted
2. Evidence has been submitted
3. Evidence has been submitted
4. Evidence has been submitted

Infection Control:

5. Evidence has been submitted
6. Evidence has been submitted

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventative actions submitted by the registered provider have been adequate to address the non- compliances under Regulation 23.

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) Persons trained in in First Aid to include First Aid Response (FAR) were available to children during the operational hours of the service.
- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position within the premises.
 - (b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the preschool 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 fire fighting 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) The registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of the fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 16 June 2025.
 - (b) The registered provider ensured that a record was available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating they were last serviced in December 2024 and the

number type and maintenance of mains powered smoke alarms throughout the service, were last serviced on the 28 August 2025.

- (2)
- (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the Inspector.
- (4) The registered provider ensured that a notice was displayed throughout the service indicating the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire.