

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL015
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Avon Lodge Creche & Montessori
-------------------------	--------------------------------

Address of Service:	Church Ave, Blanchardstown Village, Dublin 15.
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	D15 V0HE
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Bernadette Hill
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	26/03/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	15
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

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 and T. Nelson
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

The service is located in Blanchardstown village and provides full day care and sessional childcare education and care to children aged from 0 to 6 years old. The service participated in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service can cater for a maximum of 20 children attending a full day care service. There are three care rooms, a kitchen and a designated cot room. One of the care rooms was not in operation on the day of the inspection. A secure outdoor play area was located off the car park near the entrance doors.

Staffing

There are currently four adults employed including the person in charge, one childcare staff, the cook who is also on college placement and helps provide care in two of the care rooms in a supernumerary capacity and one school aged childcare staff who works directly with the school aged children. The registered provider manages the oversight of the service and works in the service as needed. There were four adults present on the day of the inspection this included the registered provider, person in charge, one childcare staff and the cook. Shortly after the inspection began a manager from another service operated by the registered provider arrived and remained on site to help facilitate the inspection process.

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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed.

Regulation 9 (1), (2), (3) and (4)-Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11(1), (2), (8) and (9)-Staffing Levels.

Regulation 15(1) (a-i) and 3(c)-Record of Pre-School Child.

Regulation 19(1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child.

Regulation 23-Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child.

Regulation 26((1)(a)(b), (2), (3) and (4)- Fire Safety Measures.

Regulation 28- Insurance.

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 8(1)- Notification of Change in Circumstances. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

The scope of the inspection included the Baby Room and the Montessori Room. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under: Regulation 15, Regulation 19 and Regulation 23.

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 registered provider, management, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The service did not submit a change of circumstance application to notify the inspectorate of the change in person in charge. There was documentary evidence to show that the named person in charge had left the service in July 2024. This was a non-compliance on the last inspection 17 January 2024. The preventive actions outlined by the registered provider were not maintained.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The service has applied for the correct person to be named in charge. The register provider will renew the change of circumstance in appropriate and managing time, when staff leaves and staff start, ensuring to submit the change of circumstance application form.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of submission of change of circumstance to Tusla.

Summary Comment

It is acknowledged that the registered provider attempted to address the non-compliance under Regulation 8. However, this non-compliance currently remains outstanding until the change of circumstance procedure has been completed. This will be reviewed in the next 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.

Compliance Information

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

(b) The registered provider and the designated person in charge were present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained in the service throughout the session.

(c) There was a clearly defined management structure in the service. Staff identified the person in charge and deputy person in charge to the inspector.

(2) Discussion with the registered provider and a review of documentation demonstrated that there were five staff employed to work in the service. The files of all four staff who work directly in the service were reviewed along with the file of the registered provider.

(a) Eight written and verified references were available from past employers.

- (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) All five adults had up to date Garda Vetting Disclosures. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for three adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Documentation was available to show that the registered provider, the person in charge and one adult who worked directly with children attending the service 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.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) The registered provider provide evidence to show that the following checks were not carried out prior to one adult working in the service.
- there was no evidence of appropriate consideration of two references.
 - there was no evidence of appropriate consideration of a Garda Vetting disclosure.

This posed a potential safeguarding risk for children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The register provider will make sure that reference checks are in place and garda vetting is done for all staff before they start in the service. The service will not allow to employ new staff until collection of all the required documentation. Garda Vetting will be in place before the new staff start in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed 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.*
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-*
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.*

Compliance Information

- (1) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children. The registered provider and two adults were available to 15 children aged between 1 to 5 years when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service. In addition, a manager from another service operated by the registered provider was available to provide support where required in the care rooms throughout the day.
- (2) The adult to child ratios were maintained correctly throughout the inspection.
- (8) (a) Two adults were present at all times in the service as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)-(i) A sample of ten 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 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 following observations are examples on how each child's learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic Needs:

- At morning snack time children were observed to be offered crackers served with apples and bananas sliced up into small pieces and milk and water for drinking. Staff discussed how children bring a dinner from home which is heated up in the service and an alternative meal of pasta with sauce is available if required. The service also provided a hot meal option for children at teatime.
- Water was available to the children in the care room throughout the day. Children had their own individually labelled water bottles. The children were observed drinking water throughout the day.
- There was a sense of belonging in the service. For example, children had their own personalised picture placemat with their favourite cartoon character and photograph. In addition, the children's artwork was displayed throughout the care rooms and there was a 'Birthday Time' display.
- There were cosy areas with a soft mat, blankets, cushions and books for rest and relaxation present in both care rooms.
- The children were observed to play outdoors during the inspection. This supported their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development.

Supporting Relationships:

- Staff discussed how information is shared with parents/guardians via the information board inside the door, email, newsletters and informal chats at the door.
- Staff managed and supported transitions in the service, for example one child was observed to be transitioning from the Pre Montessori room to the Montessori room. Staff discussed how the child would spend small periods of time becoming familiar with the room, staff and children before making the transition.

- Staff discussed how they support children to integrate and settle into the service by offering a settling in period with reduced hours for the first week to ensure a smooth transition from the home to the service.
- In the Montessori room independence was supported throughout the day. Children were observed to be given jobs to help. For example, one child helped put out the placemats and helped to serve the dinner, children were observed to partake in clean up jobs, putting items away independently and waiting their turn to wash their hands before dinner time.
- An outdoor play area was available for the children with a synthetic grass surface. The equipment and toys available included, a playhouse, a slide and ride on equipment providing learning opportunities for children.

Physical and Material environment:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms were low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity.
- Toys and equipment in the Pre Montessori room were organised into defined areas of interest. Play equipment included a toy kitchen with supporting props, musical instruments, transport vehicles, books, connecting equipment all suitable for the age and stage of the development of the children present. In addition, there was mark making materials accessible.
- Toys and equipment in the Montessori room were organised into defined areas of interest in the care room with a variety of supporting Montessori equipment available in each area. This variety of equipment allowed the children to engage in a range of learning experiences. For example, practical life, language, sensorial and mathematics experience.
- Both rooms had a visual daily routine on display and staff were observed to give children verbal reminders in advance from moving from one activity to the next activity. This provided the children with a sense of stability, security, and predictability.
- Children’s language development was supported through small group discussions, songs, and storytelling, which were observed during the inspection.

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 entrance doors to the service were secure. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the service unknown to staff and prevented children from leaving the service unsupervised.
- Foods supplied by parents/guardians were observed to be stored in the fridge.
- The access gate in the outdoor play area was observed to be secure.

Infection Control:

- Children had individual labelled cups and bottles for drinking water and milk.
- Children had individual labelled boxes to store nappies and lotions.
- There was warm water, hand soap and paper hand towels to support hygienic hand washing.
- Children had their own bed linen which was individually stored.
- Windows were opened throughout the day to allow fresh air to circulate in the care rooms.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were used for the disposal of rubbish in the care rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Safe Sleep:

- Cots used for sleeping children were observed to be in good condition free from hazards.
- Staff were aware of safe sleep procedures.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for children over 1 years old.
- Lighting was subdued in both the cot room and the care room where children slept.
- Sleep checks were completed every 10 minutes by staff members during sleep time of children. Staff recorded each child's position, skin colour and breathing pattern.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of a fire.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was a trailing flex observed in the Montessori room. This posed a risk of injury.
2. There was a cleaning agent spray observed to be accessible to children in the Pre-Montessori room.

Infection Control:

3. Soiled nappies were not stored in a suitable lidded bin and were observed to be placed in a bag which was hung above the nappy changing unit. This posed a risk of cross infection.
4. The children were not observed to have their hands washed after nappy changing procedures. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The trailing flex in the montessori room is moved up high and none of the flexes are hanging out for the children. Staff will do a risk assessment daily and report to management to fix it immediately.
2. The staff were told all the cleaning products were to be kept up high and safe stored in the kitchen away from the reach of children. Staff have been educated on the dangerous of poisonous chemicals and to keep out of reach of children's harm.

Infection Control:

3. A meeting was held with the staff to prevent this happening again, the hook was removed immediately, and staff will use an appropriate bin that is available in the nappy changing area, to dispose of the nappies, so there is no cross infection. Staff will retrain in preventing cross infection.
4. All management and staff were informed by the person in charge to encourage good hygiene hand washing, especially after changing the nappies and throughout the days with the children. All staff must encourage and help children to wash hands after changing their nappies, garden time/mealtimes. Rufus' handwashing activities will be introduced to the children to encourage them in this procedure.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the trailing flex secured.

Infection Control:

2. No documentary evidence submitted for point 2,3 and 4.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances identified 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) There was evidence to show that two staff had completed First Aid Responder Training and were available to the children attending the service during the operational hours of the service.

(2) (a) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous positions on a shelf in the care room.

(b) The first aid box was easily available to the adults caring for the children attending.

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) A record of monthly fire drills was available in the service. The most recent fire drill took place on 6 February 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in July 2024. Smoke alarms were serviced on 5 July 2024.

- (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 procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the hallway in the service and the care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided cover for 25 children from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) *A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*
- (2) *A registered provider shall ensure that-*
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and*
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.*
- (3) *A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-*
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and*
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1) There was a complaints policy maintained which outlined the following:

- (a) The procedures to be followed when making a complaint.
 - (b) The way complaints would be dealt with.
 - (c) The procedures for keeping the complainant informed on how the complaint is being dealt with.
- (2) The registered provider ensured:
- (a) A record of complaints log is maintained if a complaint was received.
 - (b) The registered provider confirmed if a complaint was received it would be handled in line with the service policy.
- (3) A review of records referred to in (2)(a):
- (a) The registered provider advised there had been no complaints received with the past two years.
 - (b) The complaint form used in the event of a complaint was made available for review by the inspection team and included the required information.