

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL117
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Blanchardstown Home - Start
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	10 Blakestown Cottages, Blakestown Road, Clonsilla, Dublin 15.
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D15 HE29
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Ann Murray
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	15/07/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM	19
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. Harte
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Blanchardstown Home Start is a part-time day care service located in a residential area of Dublin 15 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 38 children at any one time aged 0 to 6 years Monday to Friday. The service operates two sessions, 9.00am to 1.00pm, and an afternoon session from 1.15pm to 5.00pm. Blanchardstown Home Start operates from two buildings within the premises, the Creche and the Treehouse. The creche is a converted residential building with rooms to include the Bears and Cubs room (4 months to 3 years old), sanitary facilities for children and staff, a cot room, a family room, a play therapy room and office. The treehouse is a building to the rear of the premises which has two care rooms, to include the Rainforest Room (2 years 8 months to 5 years old) and the Sunshine room (2 years to 5 years old). Further sanitary facilities are available in this building. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to rear of the premises by the treehouse building. A small enclosed outdoor play space is positioned behind the cubs and bears room.

### Staffing

There are currently 17 adults working within the service. This includes the registered provider, a family liaison coordinator who is the deputy person in charge and eight qualified childcare staff who work directly with the children. There are seven adults who are employed under the Community Employment (CE) programme. Of these seven adults one person is kitchen staff, and one person is in a maintenance role. The registered provider is supernumerary and manages the oversight of the service.

### 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. 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 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 16 (1)(h)(i)(j)(k) Record in relation to a Pre-school Service
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 26(1)(a)(b) Fire Safety Measures

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child and Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the cubs and bears room and the sunshine 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.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, deputy 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-
- (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 a named person to deputise if required.
  - (b) A review of the staff roster and discussion with management demonstrated that a person in charge was rostered to be on the premises the day of inspection for the duration of the opening hours of the service. The person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived.

- (2) A review of paperwork and discussion with management showed there are currently 17 adults working in the service. The files of 7 adults who commenced working in the service since the last inspection along with Garda vetting disclosures for 7 existing staff were reviewed as part of the inspection process. The registered provider had completed the following checks:
- (a) Six written and validated references were available from past employers.
  - (b) Seven written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 14 adults. 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 2 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that 3 staff members who worked directly with the children held 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2) (a)(b) A second written and validated reference was not available for one adult.
- (3) The review of documentation available demonstrated that the checks specified in (2) were not carried out prior to one adult commencing in the service.
- The adult commenced working in the service prior to appropriate consideration of their references. It is acknowledged that one validated reference dated 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025 was received on the 16<sup>th</sup> July 2025, the day after inspection. A second written and validated reference was not provided.
  - The adult commenced prior to a curriculum vitae being obtained.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- (2) (a)(b) A second written and validated reference has been received and is now on the staff members file. Management will ensure no staff member commences employment at Home-Start without providing a CV and ensuring 2 written and validated references are provided. No staff will be taken on to our service until all essential paperwork is complete.

(3) The second validated reference and CV have been placed on the staff members file. Management will ensure any workers paperwork is completed before starting.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

- Documentary evidence

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been addressed.

**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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,*

*the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

**Compliance Information**

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. There were 6 qualified staff members including the person in charge and deputy person in charge available to the 17 children when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

**Non-Compliance Information**

(4) The minimum adult to child ratios were not always maintained in the bears and cubs’ room. The following was observed:

- One qualified adult was caring for 7 children aged 1-year 4months to 2 years 3 months between 10.30am-11.04am. Two adults who can be included in ratio were required.
- One qualified adult was caring for 8 children aged 1-year 4months to 2 years 3 months 11.04am-11.25am. Two adults who can be included in ratio were required.

It is acknowledged that management were available on the premises and checked in with staff present in the room intermittently but did not provide continuous care to the children during these times. Two other unqualified adults were present in the room but could not be included in the ratios. Adults who do not hold a minimum of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 (NQF), a comparable qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent or an exemption to a qualification cannot be part of the adult /child ratio.

This had a potential impact on the supervision and safety of the children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) Adults that have not yet received their qualification are not counted in the ratio for Cubs and Bears room.

Management cover breaks and nappy time to ensure the ratio is maintained at all times. Ratios will remain low until the staff receive their qualification, and they are allowed to be counted in the ratio. Adults without qualifications will not be allowed to care for the children unsupervised e.g. no changing nappies

Qualified staff are rostered, and staff/management rostered to cover breaks/nappies.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence of staff sign in record.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 11 has been addressed.

## Part IV – Information and Records

### Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

## Compliance Information

- (h) Details of children's daily attendance including arrival and departure times were maintained in the care rooms.
- (i) A staff roster was available.

## Non-Compliance Information

- (j) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for medication administration. A sample of 11 records were reviewed and 8 were observed to be incomplete.
  - Two records did not include the signature of parent confirming they had been informed of administration.
  - One record did not include the child's full details who received the medication or the parents' signature.
  - One record did not include the child's full details or the signature of a second staff member.
  - Three records did not include the child's full details.
  - One record did not include the signature of a second staff member.

This posed a potential impact of sharing inaccurate information resulting in a safety risk to children.
- (k) The registered provider did not ensure a full record in writing was maintained for accidents or incidents. A sample of 11 records were reviewed and all were observed to be incomplete.
  - Nine records did not include the child's full details or the signature of a second staff member.
  - One record did not include the detail of incident, the staff signatures or parents' signature.
  - One record did not include the signature of a second staff member.

This posed a potential impact of sharing inaccurate information resulting in a safety risk to children.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

- (j) A staff meeting was held to review how paperwork is completed. All room leads are aware that full details need to be completed every time a medical form is filled out and it needs to be witnessed. Medical reports are immediately brought to management for sign off. The supervisor will check forms frequently. There will be a regular review of policies regarding administration of medication.
- (k) A staff meeting was held to review how paperwork is completed. All room leads are aware that full details need to be completed every time an accident and incident form is filled out and it needs to be witnessed.

The supervisor will check forms frequently. There will be a regular review of policies regarding administration of medication.

**Supporting documentation submitted**

- Minutes of staff meeting.

**Summary Comment**

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been addressed.

**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-*

*(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

**Compliance Information**

- Staff advised of the service routine regarding meals and their frequency. On the day of inspection lunch was two types of pizza with a homemade vegetable sauce and fruit. Children were given ample time to enjoy their meal and additional portions were available. Drinks were provided with the children’s meals. Staff explained how soup is also available daily in the event a child did not like the main meal provided.
- Children were observed to move freely around the care room engaging in play. Staff joined the children at their level and used soft tones during interactions. Staff encouraged language development for young children through strategies such as modelling and repetition during conversations and songs.
- Children from the treehouse building were observed to access the outdoor play area on the day of inspection. This provided opportunity for fundamental gross motor movements. The play space included a variety of equipment to encourage and promote movement.
- Staff provided support to children during toileting and were observed to encourage the children’s independence and praise their efforts.

- A staff member was observed to respond promptly to children’s needs changing activity and providing resources based on the child’s interest.
- A child who tripped was immediately offered comfort from the staff member present in the room.

### 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 following measures were observed to be in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the child of children:

##### General Safety:

- The service entrance was secure when the inspector arrived unannounced. Staff attended the door to allow access. This helped prevent unauthorised persons from gaining access or children leaving unsupervised.
- Equipment and furniture in the care rooms were observed to be maintained and suitable for use.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.
- Flooring surface and equipment in the outdoor area was in good condition and suitable for sue.

##### Infection Control:

- Windows were open for ventilation allowing fresh air to circulate.
- Warm water, dispensed soap and single use handtowels were available in the sanitary areas.
- Foot pedal operated bins were present in the sanitary areas.
- Children’s drinks were observed to be individually labelled in the cubs and bears’ room.
- Changing mats were cleaned following nappy changing.

##### Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. The foot pedal bin in the sunshine care room used by both adults and children was damaged. The foot pedal was broken leaving a metal bar exposed which posed a risk of injury.

### Infection Control:

2. A child was not supported to wash their hands following nappy changing in the sunshine room. This posed an infection control risk and was not in line with service policy.
3. A selection of items was observed stored in the bears and cubs' sanitary area which posed an infection control risk. Items included soft furnishings such as pillows and blankets, a child's pram and children's wet weather clothing. Only items for use in the sanitary accommodation area should be stored there.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. The bin was removed and replaced. Daily risk assessments will be carried out each morning to check for possible risks in the room.

##### Infection Control:

2. A review of the nappy changing policy and infection control policy was carried out at the staff meeting. There will be regular supervision of nappy changing to remain vigilant of steps. The policy and procedure will be reviewed frequently.
3. Soft furnishings have been removed from the sanitary area, as has the buggy. Any materials are in boxes with lids and children's spare clothes are placed in a zip seal bags before placing in their cubby to prevent the risk of infection. Sanitary checklist is reviewed to ensure this does not reoccur.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.
- Staff meeting minutes.

##### Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.

### Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

#### Compliance Information

- (1) (a) A record was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2025 for the children attending the morning session and on the 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 for the children attending the afternoon session.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment had been serviced in 25<sup>th</sup> June 2025 while the smoke alarms had been serviced on 28<sup>th</sup> March 2025.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

#### Non-Compliance Information

1. The registered provider did not ensure adequate supervision of children at all times. Throughout the day of inspection unqualified staff were observed to conduct care practices such as nappy changing without supervision. This is not in line with service policy that advises each child attending the service is under the supervision of a qualified staff member at all times.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. This was addressed at the staff meeting. Until staff have completed their minimum Level 5 qualification, they will not be changing nappies or conducting other care practices. New roster to include cover of qualified staff to change nappies. No staff member will change nappies or engage in other care practices unsupervised.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

- Staff meeting minutes.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 27 have been addressed. This will be reviewed on next inspection.