

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL126
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Name of Service:	Jonix Educational Services
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Address of Service:	Casa Caterina Special School, Ratoath Road, Cabra, Dublin 7
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Eircode:	D07 YY30
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nicola Hansen
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	03/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	6	PM	6
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Area 1 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

Jonix Educational Centre is a part-time day care service located in Dublin 7. The service is one of seven services operated by the registered provider and provides early childhood care and education to children who are diagnosed with autism. The service is registered for a maximum of 6 children aged 3 to 6 years old, Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 1.30pm and from 1.45pm to 5.45pm. The service is not currently operating the afternoon service. Jonix Educational Centre operates from within a designated area of Casa Caterina Special School and has one care room and a sensory room. There are sanitary facilities available for children and staff. A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the front of the premises.

Staffing

There are currently four staff employed by the service including the person in charge. These, along with a student and the regional manager were present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider does not work in 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.

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 regional manager, 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*
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.*

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

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*

(c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and

(d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

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

(b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge was rostered present.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, and this was clearly detailed in the parent handbook and policy documents.

(2) The staff roster was reviewed and discussed with the service manager and the full files of all four staff along with the file of a student on work experience were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(a) Five validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Four validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults.

(d) Documentary evidence showed that one adult had lived in a state other than Ireland for longer than six months as an adult and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) Documentary evidence available showed that all of the checks outlined in (2) had been carried out prior to any of the adults having contact with the children in the service.

- (4) One staff member 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 Affairs

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure the following:

- (2) (a)(b) One adult had only one validated reference available for inspection.
- (4) There was no documentary evidence available that three of the four adults working directly with the children held the required qualifications or documentary evidence of a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2) (a)(b) A second reference was sourced and validated. The service ensure they will maintain accurate staff documentation.
- (4) The service engages in ongoing communication with the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs with regards to the qualification criteria. The HR department continues to favour and screen for those with a qualification in Early Child Care and Education and recognition from the teaching council.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (2) (a)(b) Evidence of reference.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(2) has been adequately addressed, however regulatory compliance for Regulation 9(4) remains outstanding.

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.

(9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured there was appropriate staffing levels in place to meet the care needs of the children. There were four adults available to the six children aged between 3 to 6 years old.
- (2) The registered provider ensured the correct ratios of adults to children were maintained for the duration of the inspection.
- (9) A student who was present was not included in the ratios and was not assigned any direct care tasks with the children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

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

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:
- (a) Details of the name, position, qualifications, and experience of all staff were maintained within the staff files.
 - (b) The service Tusla certificate detailed the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services. This was maintained within the service policy file.
 - (c) The parent handbook and policy document outlined the adult: child ratios.
 - (d) The parent handbook and policy document outlined the type of care or programme provided.
 - (e) The parent handbook and policy document outlined the facilities available within the service.
 - (f) The parent handbook and policy document outlined the opening hours and fees of the service.
 - (g) The registered provider maintained all the policies required in accordance with Regulation 10.
 - (h) Attendance records detailing the daily arrival and departure of the children were maintained.

- (i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.
- (j) The person in charge reported that no medication was administered within the service.
- (k) A record of accidents and incidents was maintained, and two were reviewed which had been completed since 2021.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the following:

- There was defined areas of interest in the care room and an adequate supply of props and other resources were available to extend the play and learning opportunities of these interest areas. Areas of interest included art, home area, mark making, books, small world and transporting.
- Props and resources included open ended and real-life materials which provided meaningful experiences for the children.
- The equipment and props available supported a range of developmental play experiences including language, sensory, creative, social and fine motor development.
- Furniture in the rooms was suitable for the age and stage of development of the children.
- Toys and equipment were stored on low-level shelving, accessible to the children, with other materials which required one to one support visible to the children.
- The room was sectioned into two areas allowing free play on one side of the room, and uninterrupted one to one tabletop activities on the other.
- Labelling using text and imagery was used extensively and effectively throughout the premises.
- The sensory room had soft matting and cushions, with low level lighting allowing for a break from activities and a more restful play experience.
- Equipment in the outdoor play area included a slide, low level climbing frame, scooter, rocker, chalks and bubbles. These provided the opportunity for fundamental movement skills such as balance, running, stopping and starting.

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 registered provider had the following measures in place to safeguard children:

General Safety:

- Entry to the premises was restricted by a gate which was managed and monitored by staff. The main door was secured for the duration of the inspection. This restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and prevented children from exiting unsupervised.
- The outdoor area was fully enclosed and there was a risk assessment displayed both in the care room and on the back of the main door enroute to the outdoor area.
- Storage and other restricted areas in the hallway were securely cordoned off.
- Trailing flexes, cleaning products and other hazardous items were secured out of reach of children.
- The transition to the outdoor play area was managed safely, with attendance books and other required equipment available and staff positioned effectively ensuring appropriate supervision.
- Radiators and other potentially hot surfaces such as piping were covered.
- Toys, equipment and furniture was suitable and maintained in good condition.

Infection Control:

- The premises were in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members. Children were supported to handwash on arrival to the service, after using the toilet and after outdoor play.
- Tables were cleaned before lunch and plates made available.
- Children's lunches which were provided by parents were appropriately refrigerated.
- Nappy changing facilities were appropriate. The nappy changing mat was in good condition and there was an adequate supply of disposable gloves and aprons available.
- Appropriate waste disposal units were available in the care room and sanitary facilities.

Administration of Medication:

- A bottle of in-date fever reducing medication was available and stored appropriately on the premises.

Fire Safety:

- Children were recorded accurately in the attendance log supporting safe evacuation in the case of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. There was no thermostatically controlled warm water in the three sinks in the sanitary accommodation. Temperature ranges of between 12.9°C and 15.8°C were recorded by the inspector. This did not support effective handwashing practices.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A thermostat has been installed to control the temperature of the warm water to support effective handwashing procedures and the Person in charge (class teacher) to continue to perform regular checks of equipment.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately 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.
- (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

The registered ensured the following:

- (1)
- (a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 25 February 2025.
 - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. Documentary evidence was available that the fire extinguishers were serviced in November 2024 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 25 November 2024.
- (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the care room and the fire assembly point was clearly displayed and visible in the outdoor area.