

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL205
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Name of Service:	Malahide Marina Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	Fragrance House, Malahide Marina Village, Malahide, Dublin, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K36 T276
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Name of Registered Provider:	Victoria Fitzmaurice
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	01/07/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	45	PM	43
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne, E Hosford
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.
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Description of service

Malahide Marina Creche and Montessori is a full day care service located in a purpose-built building in Malahide. The service provides full day care and operates from 7.30am-6.00pm Monday to Friday. There are six care rooms within the service, namely; Baby room, Wobbler room, Toddler room and Playschool room located on the ground floor and then the ECCE 1 room and the ECCE 2 room located on the first floor. Two designated sleep rooms, one located off the Baby room, and one located off the Wobbler room. An enclosed outdoor area is available to the front of the premises

Staffing

The service employs 23 staff including the registered provider, two persons in charge – one assigned to the ground floor, and one assigned to the first floor, a quality manager, sixteen childcare staff and three auxiliary staff. The registered provider was present in the service during the inspection and the two persons in charge and the quality manager were not assigned to a care room but available to assist staff and children if required.

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, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 25 and 26.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

Regulation 11 Staffing levels was assessed across all rooms.

The scope of the inspection included five rooms – Baby room, Toddler room, Playschool room, ECCE 1 room and ECCE 2 room and it did not include the Wobbler 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, two persons in charge, quality manager, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

(2) The files of the registered provider, two persons in charge, quality manager, sixteen staff and three auxiliary staff were reviewed.

(a) Thirty-six written and validated references were available from a past employer.

(b) Ten written and validated references were available from a source other than past employer

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 23 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 five adults who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that 20 adults 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.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service. On the morning of the inspection there were 12 adults working directly with 45 children aged between 1 to 6 years and in the afternoon of the inspection there were 12 adults working with 43 children aged from 1 to 6 years.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection, as follows:

- In the Baby Room, there were 4 children aged 1 years to 2 years being cared for by 1 adult in the morning and there were 5 children aged 1 years to 2 years being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.
- In the Wobbler Room, there were 2 children aged 1 years to 2 years being cared for by 1 adult in the morning.
- In the Toddler Room, there were 8 children aged 1 years to 2 years being cared for by 3 adults all day.
- In the Playschool Room, there were 6 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 2 adults all day.
- In the ECCE 1 Room, there were 12 children aged 2 years to 3 years being cared for by 3 adults all day.
- In the ECCE 2 Room, there were 13 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 2 adults in the morning and 12 children aged 3 years to 5 years being cared for by 2 adults in the afternoon.

The registered provider, two persons in charge and the quality manger were available to support staff in a supernumerary capacity, for nappy changes, toilet visits and breaks.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured, and the weekly staff roster demonstrated that there were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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

Basic Needs:

- Breakfast, snacks and afternoon tea were provided and prepared by the service and the hot meal at lunch time was provided by an external catering company. Breakfast was available from 7.30am, on the day, the inspector's observed dinner between 11.00am and 11.15am of pasta with meatballs, snack between 1.00pm to 2.00pm of fruit, crackers and yogurt, tea at 3.00pm of tomato soup and garlic bread. Additional servings were available for the children, and alternative food was provided for children with special dietary requirements.
- Water and milk were available for the children to drink.
- Children were provided with appropriate cutlery to support their independence during mealtimes.
- Mealtimes were held in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere with background music playing
- The transitions between activities such as nappy changes, visits to sanitary facility for toileting and handwashing, sleep times, mealtimes, free play and outdoor play were observed to be calm and relaxed with staff available to care for the individual needs of the children.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and the staff members engaged positively with the children throughout the process by chatting to the children in accordance with the service policy. Older children accessed the bathroom independently and staff were available to support when required.
- Children had individual named cots with clear information above each cot to include each child's name, and what they need to sleep for example a soother or toy or grow bag instead of blanket.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to be engaged with and sit with the children during play time and at mealtimes and having positive interactions during play activities of sand play, playdough and tabletop activities. They were responsive to the children and were observed to give them choices regarding their play activities.

Staff were observed to have respectful, warm and responsive interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.

- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.
- The service communicated with parents through the use of an electronic application with details of each child's sleep, food intake and other information required, verbal updates on their child's day at pick up time and by emails, social media and phone calls when required.

Physical and Material Environment

- The care rooms were bright, calm and inviting with fresh flowers on tables.
- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were laid out well, suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment available to them for example Home areas with play kitchen with supporting equipment and play food, range of construction toys to include wooden puzzles, jigsaws, building blocks, magnetics, ; toys for transporting such as cars and trucks, garages; small world play toys of animals and dinosaurs; sensory play table with sand ; for imaginary play dress up clothes and instruments: for arts and crafts – mark making materials, paper and paint directly accessible to the children; Montessori learning approach materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were also present.
- Cosy areas were present in all rooms offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The outdoor play environment to the front of the premises was fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with artificial grass. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing tunnel, sand tables, picnic table, activity table with building blocks, mud kitchen with supporting equipment, ride in cars, scooters, bikes and large building blocks.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entrance doors leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- Blind cords for blinds on windows were secure and safe.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean and suitable for use by the children.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition throughout, with the premises and equipment observed to be visually clean.
- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels and pedal operated lidded bins for disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits, after outdoor play and before and after mealtimes.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required in accordance with the service policy.
- Soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes.
- During sleep time, cots and low floor mats were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child.

Safe Sleep:

- The sleep needs for children under 2 years of age, were facilitated with access to cots for sleep and the sleep needs of children over two years of age were met through the provision of low floor mats.
- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on the children for colour, breathing, position and the temperature of the room was recorded, while children slept.

- The temperatures of the cot room and care rooms were documented and maintained between the recommended temperatures of 18-22 °C while children over 1 years old slept during the day.

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed

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) The service provided evidence that four adults trained in First Aid Response were available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and safely stored in easily accessible and conspicuous positions in the 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 firefighting 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

- (1) (a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 27 June 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced 19 May 2025 and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced June 2025.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in a conspicuous position in the service