

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL255
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Name of Service:	Rivervalley Crèche
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Address of Service:	4 Rivervalley Rise, Swords, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K67 NX07
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Corrigan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	18	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly
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.
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Description of service

Rivervalley Creche is situated in a residential area and provides a sessional, part-time and full day care service to children from 0 to 6 years. The service operates from 08:00am to 6pm and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE). A school aged service is also provided. The premises consists of 3 care rooms, the Kindergarden Room, the Caterpillar Room-Montessori and the Butterfly Room-Montessori with a kitchen area in the room, an office and sanitary facilities. An additional enclosed area is available as a breakout room. The 2 interconnecting care rooms upstairs accommodate the school aged children. An outdoor space was located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager and 9 staff working directly with the children. The registered provider was present when the inspector arrived and was available throughout the inspection. There were 8 staff members working directly with the children and 1 student on work experience present on the day of the inspection. Two staff members were employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model.

Methodology

Tusla 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 and 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, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Kindergarden Room, the Caterpillar Room-Montessori and the Butterfly Room-Montessori.

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, 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.

(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 was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 09:30am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files for 12 adults including the registered provider were reviewed. The file for a student present on the day was also reviewed. References for 11 adults were reviewed. The following was recorded:

- (a) Fifteen written validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Seven written validated references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 12 adults whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 5 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 11 adults whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in 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, Disability and Equality.

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.

(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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service at 9.30am and remained so throughout the inspection. There were 4 adults caring for 18 children on the morning of the inspection. This included 1 staff member employed as part of the Access and Inclusion Model. The registered provider was present to provide support as required. In addition, there was a student on a work experience placement.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times.

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-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) On review of a sample of 12 children’s registration records, the required information and details were available. The following information was included:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child.
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service.
- (c) a provision for the date the child ceased to attend the service.
- (d) the name and address of an emergency contact of the child that 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)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector 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 were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Children's meals are sourced from an external company and are reheated and served by designated staff members. On the day of the inspection the children had yoghurt with strawberry compote, banana, apple orange and bran flakes for morning snack and bacon arrabiata pasta and a second hot meal of pineapple curry and rice.
- The children in the Montessori rooms self-serve food into their bowls from a sharing platter and they can choose what food they like. The children in the Kindergarden room had their own bowls of food with yoghurt, banana, apple and bran flakes. Children had their own water bottles at this time. Children's water bottles were accessible to the children.
- The children's personal care needs were attended to promptly. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff members used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children. The children who were toilet trained are accompanied to the toilet.
- The two children in the Kindergarden room, slept in cots in the sleep room at their scheduled sleep time after they had their dinner. Six children slept in the Caterpillar Room-Montessori, four children slept on stackable beds, one child on a toddler bed and one child in a cot after the children had their first hot meal in the service.

- Cosy areas were equipped with child sized sofas and child sized armchairs, cushions, rugs, blankets and a selection of books for reading and relaxation.
- All the children attending the service were given the opportunity to spend time in the outdoor area during the inspection.

Supporting relationships and interactions around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. Children were comforted when upset and children received praise from staff.
- During transition to sleep, staff were available to assist the children in getting ready and helping them to settle whilst going to sleep.
- Staff communicate with parents through the use of a digital software application to share information about children's needs about meals, nappy changing and sleep. Weekly updates are shared with parents on a social media application and information meetings are held with parents.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there were photographs of children's families accessible to the children in each room to include family books, family cubes and a family wall display. Children's photographs were displayed on their coat hooks. In the book corner of the Butterfly Room-Montessori "Our Community Book" contained photographs taken of landmarks the local community. In addition, there were birthday chart display and children's artwork was displayed in the care rooms.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; the children engaged well with tidying up, visual cues such as a daily schedule and a timer were used to support transitions. Routines provided for predictability and comfort for young children.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children's independence in play.
- The care rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. In the Kindergarden room, there was a cosy area with tent, child sized sofa, cushions, basket of soft toys and a basket of books to include 'family cubes' with photographs of children's families. There were large foam blocks to provide opportunities for

physical play and wooden building blocks for construction play. There was a kitchen area with wooden kitchen and supporting materials to include natural materials such as stones and acorns. The Butterfly Room-Montessori and Caterpillar Room-Montessori were resourced with a home area including wooden kitchens with supporting materials, toy washing machine, dolls with care items, buggies and dress up materials to support dramatic and pretend play for children. There were sensory play materials to include tuff tray for water play, playdough and supporting materials, sand tray and tray for lentils.

- There were transportation toys to include trains and train tracks and small world toys including animals and dinosaurs and dolls. Construction materials included wooden blocks and plastic building bricks. Both preschool rooms had Montessori materials such as wooden cylinders and cubes, and tabletop materials such as jigsaws, construction straws and matching activities.
- There was a cosy area in each room for children to relax and a variety of books to provide opportunities for storytelling, which supported children’s language development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the service surfaced by artificial grass. There was a large, covered area providing a space for children to play in adverse weather. There was a wooden house with child sized armchair and a box of books which provided a space for storytelling and enhances children’s language development. There were two plastic slides, ride on bikes and ride in cars which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills. Children’s wellies were stored in a box at the door in the outdoor area for use during outdoor play. There was a separate digging area with wooden mud kitchen with real-life items such as a kettle for dramatic play, tyres and a sandpit and water tray for sensory play and concrete and foam blocks and sticks for construction and cooperative play. There was a buddy bench and seating area for children to sit and relax or carry out tabletop activities.

Programme of Activities

- There was a separate outdoor area which was covered with a Perspex roof and artificial grass called “The Dome” which provided an additional dramatic and pretend play space for children to include a wooden kitchen, and natural materials such as shells, sticks and pieces of wood. There was also a variety of books available for children in this area.
- The staff discussed that monthly observations of children are carried out and interest boxes are developed based on children’s emerging interests.
- Children’s emotional development was supported with an ‘Upsy Daisy Bear’ in Butterfly Room-Montessori which children would share with the other children when they wanted to display empathy with the other children.

- In Butterfly Room-Montessori, the children brought home 'Coco the Monkey', and the parents documented children's home experiences in a documentation book.

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 arrival to the service, the inspector observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with artificial grass.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Pedal operated and nappy bins were available for waste and disposal of contaminated items.

Administration of Medication:

- Health care plans were available for children.

Safe Sleep:

- Each child has their own linen for sleep time kept in separate bags.
- Sleep plans were available for a child under two years of age sleeping on a toddler bed.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed in the event of an emergency evacuation.
- There were fire drill procedures displayed in the hallway of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

- Inadequate space was left between the 4 stackable beds, toddler bed and cot set up in the Caterpillar Montessori room for the children to sleep. Six children slept in the Caterpillar Montessori room and there was inadequate spacing maintained between the stackable beds, toddler bed and cot which was found to

be less than the recommended distance of 50cm apart. The inadequate space increases the risk of spread of infection and cross infection.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

Infection Control:

1. The service had a cot in the room to support a child who liked the adult to sit with him. The cot can stay in the Kindergarten room to make more space. The staff will use the measuring tape to ensure 50cm between the beds. On days when there are extra children sleeping, the service will use the Butterfly Room too if needed. The table is foldable and on wheels and can be removed along with other equipment from the room if needed. With no cot the beds fit with 50cm between them.

Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. It has been added to the sleep policy that staff carry out measurements to ensure 50cm between beds.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. There was certification to show that 3 staff members were trained in First Aid Response (FAR), all of whom were present

on the day of the inspection. It is acknowledged that 4 staff members also held current Paediatric First Aid training, 3 of whom were present on the day of the inspection.

(2)(a) An adequately stocked first aid box was observed in the nappy changing area of the service.

(b) The first aid box was stored out of the reach of the children but available to staff as needed.

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

1(a) A record of fire drills was available on the premises with the last fire drill as having been carried out on the 30 of September 2025.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record for firefighting equipment was available. Firefighting equipment was last service on 12 August 2025, and the smoke alarms were serviced on 20 October 2025.

(4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the hallway and throughout the service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated

Compliance Information

(c) There was heating in the children's sanitary facilities and in the nappy changing area of the service.