

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL343			
Name of Service:	Woodlands Crèche & Montessori			
Address of Service:	1 Dun Emer Rise, Lusk, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	K45 KX03			
Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Ryan			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	12/05/2025			
No of pre-school children:	AM	57	PM	30
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

Woodlands Crèche and Montessori is situated in Lusk Co. Dublin and is registered to operate from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday. It offers full-day, part-time and sessional childcare to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for eligible pre-school children from 9.00am to 12.00 midday daily for 38 weeks each year. Two of the four care rooms in the service, namely the Wobbler Room and the Toddler Room are located on the ground floor of the premises, while Montessori Room 1 and Montessori Room 2 are located on the first floor. There is a designated sleep room adjacent to the Wobbler Room with six standard cots, and a fully enclosed outdoor play area adjoins the premises.

Staffing

There are 18 staff members employed in the service, consisting of the service manager and a further 15 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children and 2 ancillary staff members employed to clean the service. 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, 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, 26 and 29.

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 all rooms - the Wobbler room, Toddler room, Montessori 1 room and Montessori 2 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 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

(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) It was confirmed by the person in charge that three new childcare staff have been employed in the service since the last inspection on the 18 November 2024. The files of these three new staff members along with Garda Vetting disclosure for one staff member whose file was reviewed on the last inspection were reviewed.

(a) Two written and validated references were available in relation to two adults from a past employer.

One written and validated reference was available in relation to one adult from a past employer.

(b) One written and validated reference was available in relation to one adult from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for four adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for two 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 the three 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 57 children aged between 1 to 6 years and in the afternoon of the inspection there were 7 adults working with 30 children aged from 1 to 6 years.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection as the table below demonstrates.

Room Name	Age profile	Morning	Afternoon
Wobbler room	1 years to 2 years	3 adults with 8 children	2 adults with 8 children
Toddler room	2 years to 3 years	3 adults with 12 children	2 adults with 7 children
Montessori 1 room	3 years to 5 years	2 adults with 17 children	1 adult with 5 children

Montessori 2 room	3 years to 5 years	3 adults with 20 children	2 adults with 10 children
Total	1 years to 5 years	11 adults with 57 children	7 adults to 30 children

The designated person in charge and two staff were available in a supernumerary capacity and covered in rooms as required.

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed that two adults were on the premises during the operation of the service.

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:

- The service served a hot meal and snacks to the children. On the day of inspection, the inspectors observed a hot meal served between 11.30am and 11.50pm in the care rooms supplied by an external food company, which was chicken curry with rice. At 3.00pm afternoon tea, supplied from home was served. At 10am and 5pm the service provided a snack of breadsticks or crackers, apples and cheese. Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- Children's need for sleep and rest were met through the provision of comfortable rest areas available. Cots and low beds with individual bedding were available to the children who required sleep. At sleep time, the rooms were darkened and white noise played.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to have respectful and responsive interactions with the children through the use of positive non-verbal communication strategies such as being at the children's level.
- Communication with parents is through electronic application, newsletters and through a message application on a phone.

Physical and Material Environment

- Low level shelving and child sized furniture supported children's independence.

- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were 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.
- 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 rear of the premises were fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with soft matting tiles. There were two overhead shelters to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing frame with a slide, a climbing frame, a playhouse with climbing wall and two slides and outdoor play kitchen.

Non-Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

1. On arrival in the Toddler room at 10.45am, 12 children were watching television while three staff sat on tables, the person in charge and the room leader confirmed that staff were having a planning meeting. This is not a recommended learning and development activity for children aged 2 to 3 years of age who require interactive activities with two way and responsive communication.
2. In the downstairs sanitary facility used by the Wobbler and Toddler room, between 11.13am and 11.36am when 9 children were taken in groups of 4, then 3 and then 2, to have their nappies changed or a nappy put on for sleep, the changing mat used was placed on the floor in full view of the children waiting to be changed, which did not protect the dignity of the child being changed, while each child lay on the changing mat.
3. In the Wobbler room, the transition from activities to mealtimes was not observed to be calm and relaxed with staff not recognising cues from children to meet their individual care needs, for example:
 - One child was placed into a highchair at 11.26am and became visibly upset while waiting for their dinner to be served. After waiting for 13 minutes staff had to remove the child as they were too upset to eat. The child was placed into their cot at 11.49am with no dinner eaten.
 - At 11.36am, one child who is not upset is given their dinner before the child seated in the highchair at 11.26am, who was upset.
4. In the Wobbler room, children attending a full day care service were not offered food every three hours as recommended by the Nutrition Standards for Early Learning and Care services May 2023, dinner was

served between 11.30 and 11.40 am and afternoon tea was at 3.10pm, this gap between meals greater than 3 hours.

Physical and Material Environment:

5. In the Wobbler room the play environment did not promote independent, and child led play, for example:
 - The doors of the play kitchen were screwed shut and therefore reducing the play experience for the smaller children in the room.
 - Tables and chairs not made available for children for tabletop activities between meals.
 - Boxes were not visually labelled with pictures to aid choice of toys for the children.
6. Children attending the Wobbler room up to 4pm and children in the Montessori 1 and Montessori 2 rooms attending the service for ECCE hours from 9am to 12 pm and part -time from 9 to 2pm did not experience the opportunity for outdoor play. Children require outdoor play daily.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Basic Needs:

1. Screen Time will not be permitted with the children. Staff have been informed and strict rule applied.
2. Children are now taken individually to have their nappy changed to ensure dignity is maintained as well as better individual interactions and individual bonding with the children. Nappy changing procedure has been adjusted and all staff aware and given a copy. The registered provider has ensured adequate cover is available to support staff while nappy changes take place. Close observation by management also.
3. Children are no longer placed in highchairs or at the table until dinner has arrived in the room. If a child is particularly tired, they will be presented their dinner first or staff can request dinner earlier from the kitchen. Staff have been informed of this both in the room and in the kitchen.
4. Teatime has been adjusted to meet the three hour gap for meals and this daily routine will be adhered to by staff to meet the needs of the children.

Physical and Material Environment:

5. The Wobbler room has been overhauled. Areas have been defined with appropriate labels, tables are no longer behind the gate, children have access to them all day. Play kitchen is now fully accessible for children. Staff are attending training on the national curriculum framework to ensure better practice. On going observing of the room by management to ensure its being run to best meet the childrens needs.

6. Staff have been reminded that outdoor play is a daily part of their curriculum. The service will ensure that children have appropriate clothing for all weather. Outdoor activities are part of monthly curriculum planning. Staff have completed CPD training with external agency.

Supporting documentation submitted

Nappy changing Policy, Toddler room adjusted routine, Photographic Evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 has been adequately addressed.

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 door 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.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean and suitable for use by the children

Infection Control:

- Soothers were stored in individual labelled boxes.

Safe Sleep:

- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.
- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed on the children for colour, breathing, position while children slept

Fire Safety:

- Monthly fire drills were carried out in the service.

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. It is acknowledged that the renewed Garda Vetting was submitted on 22 May 2025.
2. The record of attendance for the Montessori 2 room did not accurately reflect the children in the room, this reduced the effective evacuation of children in the event of an emergency. For example, two children who left at 12pm were not signed out until 12.57 pm when the inspector highlighted this to the person in charge.
3. Tall shelving units in the Montessori 1 room, were not anchored securely, leading to a safety risk of injury.

Infection Control:

4. During the process of changing four nappies of four children and placing of nappies on five children in preparation for sleep time, by one staff member, the nappy process was not completed as per best practice guidelines or the service policy as follows:
 - One apron and one pair of gloves were used and were retained for the duration of the nine nappy processes of all nine children.
 - The apron and gloves were worn by the staff member into the care room and out into the outdoor area.
 - Childrens hands were not washed, at the end of each nappy process.
 - The staff member did not wash their hands at the end of each of the nine nappy changing processes before caring for the next child.
 - The nappy mat was wiped with a wipe and not cleaned using a cleaning agent between each nappy process. It is acknowledged the mat was cleaned with a cleaning agent and paper towel at the end of the nine nappy processes.
 - Children were observed crawling on the floor of the sanitary facility while waiting their turn.
5. In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms, cold water from the cold tap was used for handwashing of childrens hands before dinner, this is not conducive to effective handwashing and leads to a risk of poor infection control.
6. In the Wobbler room, at 3.11pm, fruit, bread and crackers were placed directly onto the table surface at snack time. This increased the potential risk of cross infection.

- In the Montessori 2 room, staff present were unaware if the wet cloths in two baskets were clean or dirty. This increased the potential risk of cross infection.

Administration of Medication:

- On review of 10 medication and administration records on the electronic application, nine forms did not include the signature of the parent on review of the record of their child to confirm that they were aware of the administration of medication that day. This is not in line with the service policy which states that parents must sign the record to acknowledge notification of medicine administration.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Garda Vetting has been obtained for the staff member, Garda Vetting will be reviewed regularly to ensure this does not happen again
- Staff have been reminded to sign children out accordingly on the electronic application and paper register. Notification will occur on the electronic application if a child is not signed out at their designated time. Regular head counts will be completed to match registers.
- Tall Shelves in upstairs rooms have been secured to the walls. Any new furniture will be fixed to the walls going forward.

Infection Control:

- Nappy Changing policy has been updated; staff have been retrained on this in order to ensure best practice. The service will ensure that the nappy procedure is fully compliant by all new staff. Current staff will be observed by management regularly to ensure continuous best practice.
- Staff have been informed to ensure children are using correct tap for hand washing. Temperatures have been checked by plumber to ensure safety. Staff have been reminded of this in staff meetings, to ensure to wash childrens hands one at a time with the correct tap in use.
- Children will use their lunchboxes at teatime and if a child requires a plate, they are given food on a plate. Staff have been informed of this and management will ensure it is adhered to.
- Baskets are now clearly labelled clean or dirty and children have been shown this in circle time.

Administration of Medication:

- Parents have signed all past medicine forms. Parents will be verbally asked to sign the medicine administration forms as well as receiving a notification on the electronic application. Room leaders will check all medicine forms weekly.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Garda Vetting, Photographic evidence

Infection Control:

Nappy Changing Policy, Photographic Evidence

Administration of Medication:

Photographic Evidence

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately 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 service provided evidence that five 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 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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 28 April 2025.
- (b) A record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment demonstrating it was last serviced on the 20 February 2025 and for the number, type and maintenance of the smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced on the 19 June 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises

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*
 - (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
 - (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (c) The service was adequately lit, heated and ventilated.
- (e) The service was equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities to included two available nappy changing units in the downstairs sanitary facility.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. In the sanitary facility upstairs, one tap and connecting pipework were in a state of poor repair as they were loose and not secure in their attachment to the sink.
 2. In the Montessori 2 room, the blue seating required repair as it was observed to be damaged and torn.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
1. Pipework has been repaired and new tap fitted. New bathroom being installed during the summer. Weekly maintenance checks taken by management to ensure this doesn't occur again.
 2. Covers have been placed in blue sofas. New Sofas are being researched. Maintenance checks will be completed by management to ensure this does not happen again.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic Evidence

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 29 has been adequately addressed.