

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY159				
Name of Service:	Windfort Creche Ltd				
Address of Service:	Windfort, Headford, Co. Galway				
Eircode:	H91 D524				
Name of Registered Provider:	Marian McDonagh				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	25/07/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>25</td> <td>PM</td> <td>23</td> </tr> </table>	AM	25	PM	23
AM	25	PM	23		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Tusla Child and Family Agency Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway</p>				
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel				
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

Windfort Creche Ltd is a private early years care and education facility which opened in 2003 and is attached to the registered provider's home. It provides a range of services including full day care, part-time and sessional services. While registered to accommodate children aged from 0-6 years it is currently accommodating children from 1 to 6 years of age. Opening hours are from 08:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme operates within these hours from 09:00 – 12:00.

The service is in the rural area of Windfort near Headford, in county Galway. Four care rooms are available namely: Cubs, Meerkats, Lions and Toddler. In addition, there is a kitchen where the service meals are prepared, adult and children's sanitary areas and a dedicated sleep room. The outdoor play areas are located at the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are 7 staff employed in the service including the registered provider and an ancillary worker.

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 registered provider, 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.

(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 register provider was the designated person in charge and a named person was available to deputise, as required.
 - (b) Both the registered provider and the deputy were observed working in the service while the pre-school children were present.
- (2) One new adult had commenced employment since the last inspection on 23/07/2024, therefore this file was reviewed:
- (a) One of the 2 validated references was from a past employer.
 - (b) The second validated reference was from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was on file for the new adult who had commenced employment since the last inspection. The additional 6 adults had Garda vetting disclosures on file, demonstrating compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3

years.

(d) The curriculum vitae of the new adult who commenced employment evidenced that no overseas police vetting was required.

(4) Evidence the new adult employed had obtained a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications was provided.

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 on the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of staff working directly with the children in the service.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was met:

There were 6 adults working directly with 25 children in the morning and 23 children in the afternoon.

(8)

(a) The staff roster indicated that at least 2 adults were on the premises while the early years children were present.

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) A sample of 12 pre-school records, for children from three care rooms were reviewed. The following particulars were found to be compliant; (1) (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The children's pre-school records were reviewed by the inspector on the premises on the day of inspection.

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.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the manager, deputies and all staff were available in the staff recruitment files available in the service.
 - (b) Details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide was available on the Tusla certificate displayed in the service.
 - (c), (d), (e) and (f) adults/child ratios, type of care programme, facilities available, opening hours and fees were available in the Terms and Conditions provided to parents/guardians on enrolment.
 - (g) The policies, procedures and statements required under Regulation 10 were available on soft copy in the office of the service.

- (h) Details of attendance by each early years child was recorded in the attendance record books available in each care room. The inspector observed that the records from January to July 2025 indicated that the children were signed in after 08:00 and signed out on or before 17:30.
- (i) Details of the daily staff roster were presented to the inspector on arrival.
- (j) Two administration of medication records were available from the period from January to July 2025 and were reviewed by the inspector. Both records were found to contain all relevant information required.
- (k) A sample of eight accident/incident reports were reviewed. All were found to contain the required information including care of the child, signatures from the parent, staff member and manager.
- (3) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to review on the premises by the inspector.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
- (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The care rooms and the outdoor play areas were furnished with resources and equipment which were suitable for the various age groups of children attending the service. They provided opportunities to enhance the learning needs of all children across all areas of development. Examples included children in the Cubs care room aged 12 – 24 months who were observed to have access to mats under foot preventing impact from injury for children not yet walking, practicing their walking skills who were unbalanced, a pull up bar to practice pulling themselves up to standing position, mirrors positioned at the children’s height helping to foster self-awareness, push and pull toys helping the children to learn the concept of cause and effect and vinyl shapes that the children could use safely to practice gross motor skills of climbing and crawling.

Two covered outdoor areas were available for older and younger children to play safely in all weathers. In

In addition, there were 7 areas available where children were observed practicing their gross motor skills of cycling, running, balancing, throwing and catching. Opportunities for imaginary play were available from various pieces of wooden equipment including a large boat, post office and mud kitchens with resources. Foam building bricks were available for construction activities and easels were visible for creative expression.

Feeding of animals, including hens and ducks, from a safe distance behind fencing, which was carefully supervised by an adult, was observed providing opportunities for the children to learn respect for living things and social responsibility.

(b) Adequate and suitable facilities were available in each care room for the children to rest or sit quietly. The following rest/sleep areas were observed during the inspection, with children under 2 years of age having access to a standard cot:

Cubs sleep room – The inspector observed 2 children, aged 12 months to 24 months, sleeping at 10:05 and 4 children asleep at 12:30, 3 of whom wore sleep suits, in the dedicated sleep room with 4 cots. Each cot was supplied with a waterproof mattress, fitted sheet and cellular blanket. The cots were placed 50 centimetres apart. The temperature of the sleep room was recorded as 20.5°C, within the required 18°C – 22°C for children over 12 months. An adult was observed recording 10-minute physical sleep checks on the children while they slept. These detailed the position, breathing pattern and pallor of each child during these periods. A camera was positioned in the sleep room to ensure the visibility of all cots and a viewing window provided visibility from the corridor.

Toddler sleep room – (Not in use on the day as a care room, only in use as a sleep room at lunch time). There were 2 children from the Lions care room (2 years 8 months to 6 years) and 4 children from the Meerkats care room (2 years – 2 years 8 months) observed resting/sleeping on sleep mats on the floor of the care room at 12:15. Each mat was supplied with a sheet and blanket and the mats were placed at least 50 centimetres apart. The sleep room temperature was recorded as 20°C and physical sleep records, recorded every 10-minutes were furnished to the inspector by the adult supervising the children in the room. Ambient lighting ensured that the adult could easily see the children in the room.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The healthy eating policy and the 2-week menu were available for parents to view in the service. Healthy meals and snacks were observed being served at regular times throughout the day. All snacks were provided by the parents/guardians and were stored in the fridge in the kitchen. The hot meal served at lunch time was supplied by the service.

Staff stated breakfast was facilitated as required. A snack was observed being served in the Lions care room at 09.55 and consisted of bite sized pieces of fruit, yogurt and filled sandwiches. Each child had their own plate and water was available from individual water bottles which were stored within easy reach of the children. A hot vegetarian lunch of pasta and vegetables was observed being served to children in the Cubs care room where the children had access to bowls, spoons and two handled cups for drinking water. Adults were observed assisting where necessary and the children were observed being given the opportunity to feed themselves. Alternative food was available for children who did not want what was on the menu and bibs were available for children who required them. Staff stated an additional snack was offered in the afternoon.

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:

- The main door was secured on arrival preventing unauthorised adults from entering the building and children from exiting unsupervised.
- Windows were fitted with restrictors preventing children from exiting or falling from them.
- Cleaning agents were secured on high shelving out of reach of the children.
- Finger protectors were fitted to the doors ensuring children's safety.

- The perimeter of the outdoor areas was secured with metal and wooden fencing and high hedging. Gates were fitted with secure devices.

Infection Control:

- Children's bags and coats were observed to be hung on hooks away from the floor area.
- Tissues were easily accessible to the children for personal hygiene.
- The nappy changing procedures of the service were observed to be followed by staff carrying out nappy changing. Staff were observed wearing single use aprons and gloves, used nappies were disposed of in a pedal operated nappy bin which was lined and sealed. The staff member sanitised the mat after use and the adults and children washed their hands after nappy changing.
- Sinks in use by the adults and children in the indoor and outdoor areas were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, recorded at 23.8°C , dispensing soap and paper towels. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed throughout the day particularly after toileting, coming in from outdoor play and before eating food.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication was available in the event it was required.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed and fitted with thumb twist cylinders aiding the quick evacuation of children and adults in the event of an emergency.
- Fire extinguishers were secured with brackets on the walls of the service.
- Fire assembly points were visible in front and back outdoor areas.

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) Certificates were on file to evidence that 2 staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR); both of whom were available while the pre-school children were on the premises.
- (2)
- (a) The well stocked first aid box and cabinet, with first aid supplies, were stored within easy reach of the adults in the kitchen.
 - (b) The first aid box was available at all times while the early years children were present 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as 9 July 2025 with the previous monthly drills recorded on 18 June 2025 and 29 May 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. Both certificates were dated 7 July 2025.

(2)

(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.

(4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the care rooms, sleep rooms and sanitary area walls.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished to the inspector which included the following details:

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 35
- The type of service: Full Day Care
- Expiry date: 27 March 2026.