

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY208		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Pixie Lane Creche Montessori		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Units 1 & 2 Caheroyan Road, Caheroyan, Athenry, Co. Galway.		
<b>Eircode:</b>	H65 YN81		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Marie Hannon		
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	10/07/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	36	PM 36
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	TUSLA - Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality Assurance Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	H. Heagney		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable		

### Description of service

Pixie Lane Crèche and Montessori operates from the ground floor premises in the town of Athenry, Co. Galway. The pre-school is registered to provide a sessional, part- time and full day care service. The service operates for pre-school children aged 6 months to 6 years of age. The operating hours are from 7:30hrs to 18:30hrs, Monday to Friday. A child centred play-based pre-school curriculum focusing on emerging interests is provided. This early years' service is in a purpose-built, single storey premises in Athenry town. The service operates from three playrooms, namely the Baby Wobbler room, Junior Pre-school room and Montessori room. The premise has its own kitchen and an arrangement where a food delivery company supplies the main meal. Adjacent to the Baby Wobbler room, there are interlinked designated sleep rooms. Stackable beds are available for older pre-school children's sleep provision. There are designated outdoor play areas available, to the rear of the premises, for children's play, exploration, and fresh air. There was an outdoor classroom and all weather sheltered area the children could use during inclement weather.

### Staffing

The registered provider works between this service, and a partner pre-school. There is a designated person in charge and a deputy person on the premises. Twelve staff hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff have documentary evidence of ongoing training and education. There is a designated chef, who prepares, and serves the service meals.

### 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.

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

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

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

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

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

*(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)

At all times during the period of the inspection, the person in charge ensured that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children.

(b)

On the day of the inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. The service has a designated person in charge and a named person who was able to deputise as required. At all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, either the designated person in charge or the named person is on the premises.

(2)(a)&(b)

Thirteen staff files were reviewed

Twenty-six of the twenty-six validated references, on file were from a past employer or from a source other than the past employer.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the thirteen staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes for two staff members 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.

(4)

Twelve staff who were working directly with children, held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI), at a Level 5 to 8, in Early Childhood Care and Education. Copies of qualifications were on file for the twelve staff.

### 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)

There was a designated person in charge and there was a named person available to deputise in the service. On the day of inspection, the person in charge was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the remainder of the inspection.

(2)

On the morning and afternoon of the inspection, there were 36 children present.

- 1 child was 10 months old,
- 7 children were aged between 1 to 2 years,
- 10 children were aged between 2 to 3 years,
- 19 children were aged between 3 to 5 years.

There were seven staff directly caring for these children.

Additionally, the registered provider and person in charge assisted with the administration parts of the inspection and acted as childcare relief.

(8)(a)

The registered provider ensured that there were two persons on the premises at all times while the pre-school was operating.

### 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.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.*

*(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.*

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)&(i)

Twelve children's records were sampled and reviewed by the early year's inspector.

The twelve records reviewed showed that the entries were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The twelve children's records contained the following:-

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date in which the child first commenced in the service.
- The date on which the child stopped attending the service (where relevant).
- The name and address of the child's parent or guardian, and a telephone number where that parent or guardian (or a relative or friend of the parent or child) can be contacted during the hours of operation.
- Written authorisation / permissions for collecting the child.

- Details were recorded of any illness, allergy, or additional need(s) the child had, together with all the information relevant to the provision of specific care or attention.
  - The name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner.
  - A record of any immunisations the child has had and or a disclaimer (where applicable).
  - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.
- (4) &(5) The registered provider advised and documentary evidence from file review indicated, that all relevant children’s records were kept for 2 years from the date a child stops attending 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- Each child was given enough time to eat and enjoy their snack(s) and meal(s) without being rushed. The atmosphere during mealtimes was relaxed, with pleasant social interaction among the children and staff.
- The staff responded to children’s individual personalities, sensitivities and needs in relation to nappy changing, toileting and toilet training.
- On the day of the inspection, ten children from the Baby Wobbler and Junior Pre-school required nappy changing and were changed in a sensitive manner while having their dignity and privacy maintained.
- The toilet trained children had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait to use the toilet. Children were allowed to take their time during toileting. Staff encouraged and supported children to become more independent in toileting practices.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence, and to develop self-help and personal hygiene skills. Younger children’s soothers were steam sterilised as per the service policy.
- The service had safe and comfortable spaces for toddlers or children not walking to lie, roll, creep, crawl, pull themselves up, learn to walk and to be protected from children who were more mobile.
- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.

For example:

- assigning a key person to each child;
  - showing respect for each unique child and developing their trust;
  - being actively involved in children’s play, where appropriate (initiating games, joining in when invited to by children);
  - behaving in a way that creates a positive atmosphere (having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection);
  - listening to the voice of the child as they communicate their needs, thoughts, and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children’s cues, gestures, and body language;
  - encouraging children to think critically, ask questions and respond to them in a way that promotes sustained shared thinking; nurturing and comforting children;
  - using soft tones, the child’s individual name, and getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- Visual aids (picture and word reminders) and instructions were displayed and used with the children to support their learning.
  - The indoor playrooms and outdoor play environments were visually pleasing and based on the child’s needs, interests, choices, age and stage of development. The staff advised play materials and equipment were rotated on a seasonal and child interest bases. There were store cupboards and a outdoor sheds for the storage of toys, and equipment.
  - The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried. The children were supported to be confident about their identity and to have a strong sense of belonging, each day, while in the service.
  - The service provided parents and guardians with daily information, including significant events or activities involving their child, for example, verbal communication at drop of and collection times, a social media interactive communication application and a bespoke childcare application.
  - The service had a designated childcare application with interactive communication with parents and guardians. There was section with photographs and a description of the child engaged in activities. Staff observations, a child’s milestones and individual learning stories were captured. The childcare application showed details of sleep provisions, meals, nappy changing / toileting, special activities, and a child’s likes, needs and preferences and general observations / comments.

- Each child had a profile scrapbook with photographs and descriptions of activities engaged in and samples of the child's art and craft work. The scrapbooks examined captured seasons, festivals, celebrations and weekly themes such as bugs, the farm, bunny visit, pasta play, tasting citrus fruits, sensory play and space.
- The service provided opportunities for children to be involved with activities for example preparing for the graduation. There was evidence of community visitors such as the fire brigade personnel with the fire engine, a paramedic and a pizza man who showed the older children how to make pizzas. The staff advised these visitors described their role in the community to the children and their day-to-day life. There was evidence that the older children visited the local library, the post office, coffee shop and grocery.
- Positive strategies were used by staff to support a child's inclusion such as individual greetings, family photographs, encouragement and gratitude. Children were supported to recognise, express and cope positively with emotions.
- In the Junior Pre-school room, after the main meal, sleeping children were supervised at all times by a staff member who remained in the room with the children. Throughout the day the children in the Baby Wobbler room were observed sleeping on demand with a staff member going into the sleep room at least every 10 minutes and observing each child. Physical checks of sleeping children (at least every 10 minutes) were recorded in accordance with the service's policy on safe sleep.
- Staff adjusted their level of support provided to children depending on the child's abilities, allowing for children's partial participation and participation with support.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed at free play, at story time, at circle time, at construction building, mix and matching, at sensory play, at pretend kitchen/ shop/ house with play accessories, and sorting stacking materials. The children used links and connectors, painted, played games, puzzles, and insets. The children enjoyed playing with a selection of transport vehicles. They fed, and dressed baby dolls, played with small world furniture, little people, cuddly toys, and dolls and musical instruments. They enjoyed art and craft work including painting, and sensory play.
- On the day of inspection, the children were predominantly played outside. In the outdoor areas, the children were observed running, playing chases, at story time, at chalk play, riding bicycles and scooters, at sand play filling buckets and digging. The children played house/ kitchen/ shop, had fun on the slides, and climbing the frame. The children chatted to the inspectors proudly advising that they were 'pixies and superheroes'. They advised the inspector of their 'happy tummies' after their meal, chatted about the good weather, fancy cars and a staff member's upcoming wedding.

- The staff listened to children in a caring, gentle way when they expressed emotions, and reassured them that it is normal to experience positive and negative emotions at times. The staff acknowledged and accepted children's feelings (positive and negative) and the relationships between children's actions and other's responses. In all the playrooms, the children were given choice on what to do next.
- The staff were observed helping children to find solutions, supporting them, and talking to the children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, and commentating, extending a child's activities and initiating games. The staff provided significant opportunities for the child to decide their play activities and experiences.
- Staff responded to the younger children in a timely and appropriate way when they were crying or when becoming upset.
- Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion. For example, the inspectors noted that the staff acknowledged a child's engagement in an activity 'that is great' 'well done' 'how are you?' and used questions prompts such as 'what should we do next?', 'let's look at how you are feeling', 'we can all share', 'look at this', 'is there any other way to do this?', to allow children to critically think and explore.
- The staff supported children to enter social groups, and to learn to help and positively engage with other children. They encouraged and praised children for specific, positive, and appropriate behaviours. Children were given positive alternatives, rather than just being told 'no'. Children were supported in preventing, managing, and resolving conflict. Children could identify, name, and explore their feelings both positive and negative.

## 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 service had a healthy eating policy.
- Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes are available for children. The food was suitable for the age and stage of development of the child, and there was enough food supplied to cover the number of hours the child is in the care of the service. The children in Full Day Care – that is, for more than 5 hours – had at least two meals and two snacks offered to them, one of which is a hot meal. If a child does not want the food offered for any reason, a healthy alternative was offered.
- In the morning, the children were offered a selection of breakfast cereal, porridge
- At 10.00hrs, the children were given pears, orange, banana and apple pieces with milk supplied by the service. Additionally, a child could have their snack of crackers, yogurts, sandwiches supplied by parents or guardians.
- At 11.30hrs, the younger children had fish pie with fish, carrots, peas, leek, and cream sauce.
- At 12.00hrs, the older children had chilli con carne.
- At 14.30hrs, the children had tuna or cheese pasta salad.
- At 17.30hrs, the children were offered banana bread.
- Children’s drinks were available to allow the children the opportunity to ‘self-serve’.
- The crockery, cutlery and drinking utensils used were suitable for the children’s ages and stage of development.
- The service provided furniture and utensils that were age appropriate and developmentally suitable to encourage each child to be involved in and enjoy his or her snack / mealtimes.
- Perishable items from children’s lunch boxes were stored in a fridge in each playroom.
- Staff advised no child was on formula feeds.

## 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the thirteen staff members. However, the renewal date for two staff member vetting disclosures 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’.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

1. On the 11<sup>th</sup> of September 2024, the registered provider submitted a written response to state the garda vetting for the two staff members has been renewed.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

##### General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for the two staff members dated 26/07/2024 and 29/7/2024 and a staff checklist was submitted to the office of the early years’ inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

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

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service’s insurance specifying the address of the service, catering for a full day care service for 50 children at any one time, with an expiry date of 27<sup>th</sup> of March 2025, was available.

The insurance covered

- public liability,

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- personal accident,
- against fire and theft,
- outings,
- building.