

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY208
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Pixie Lane Creche Montessori
-------------------------	------------------------------

Address of Service:	Units 1 & 2 Caheroyan Road, Caheroyan, Athenry, Co. Galway
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	H65 YN81
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Hannon
-------------------------------------	--------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	16/12/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	20
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
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

Pixie Lane Creche and Montessori is a private childcare service in operation since 2014. It accommodates children aged from 0 to 6 years of age. While registered opening hours are from 07:30 until 18:30 current opening hours are from 07:30 to 18:00 for 51 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme operates within these hours from 09:00 to 12:00, school term time only.

The service operates from a ground floor building in the town of Athenry in east county Galway. There are 3 care rooms in operation namely: Baby/Wobblers, Junior Pre-school and Montessori. There is a kitchen, where the cook prepares food on site, an office, adult and children's sanitary areas and a staffroom. The secure outdoor play area is located at the rear of the service. A carpark is in operation at the side of the building.

Staffing

There are 12 staff employed by the service including the cook and the registered provider.

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

On inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 (d). These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 registered provider was the designated person in charge and there were designated persons available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The staff roster indicated that the designated persons were available while the pre-school children were on the premises.
- (2) Recruitment files for 11 of the 12 adults were reviewed as the registered provider's recruitment file had previously been assessed at a sister service on 4 September 2025.
- (a) Twenty of the 22 required validated references were from previous employers.
 - (b) The remaining 2 of the required 22 validated references were from sources other than previous employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 11 adults; however, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting time frames as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda

vetting every 3 years. Please refer to the information outlining under regulation 23 of this report.

- (d) Overseas police vetting was available for 6 adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than 6 months.
- (4) There was evidence that 10 of the 11 adults who required a childcare qualification had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. The eleventh adult, for whom a childcare qualification was required, had a Letter of Eligibility to practice from the Department of Children, Disability and Equality and the remaining adult did not required a childcare qualification.

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.*
- (3) 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) Documentary evidence, in the form of attendance records and staff rosters, indicated that adequate numbers of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3) The adult/child ratio was met. There were 9 adults observed working directly with 26 children when the inspector arrived at the service.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were 2 staff members on the premises while the early years children were present in the building.

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:

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis.

Compliance Information

(1)
(i) The staff roster for the service was available which displayed the status of each staff member including staff on duty, staff ratios, adults not included and start/finish times on attendance.

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 promoted healthy eating. A 3-week menu plan was visible for parents/guardians to view outside the kitchen opposite the entrance door of the service.
- Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals. Staff stated breakfast of wheat and oat-based cereals was available between 07:30 and 09:00 in the morning. Snack provided by the onsite cook was observed to consist of various bite sized pieces of fruit including apple, pear and kiwi along with wheat crackers. A hot lunch of spaghetti bolognese with carrots and broccoli was served by the cook in the Baby/Wobbler room at 11:30. It was of a suitable consistency for the age and stage of development of the children in the room. While staff assisted children in the Baby/Wobbler room to feed themselves children in the Junior Pre-school room were encouraged to spoon food from their bowls by themselves. Ham sandwiches were observed being served in the Montessori at 14:45. Children were not rushed and those who had finished were observed sitting with a staff member who was reading a book in the rest/quiet area.

- Appropriate cutlery and crockery were provided for each age group with Baby/Wobblers observed drinking from 2 handed cups and the Montessori and Junior Pre-schoolers observed drinking from individually labelled water bottles.
- Children in the Montessori care room were observed accessing the nearby toilets by themselves and staff were nearby to remind children to wash their hands. Staff were observed bringing children inside to access the toilets when they were playing in the outdoor area in the afternoon, ensuring their needs were being met.
- Bibs were in use in the Baby/Wobbler room for children who required them to protect their clothing at mealtimes.
- Children in each of the care rooms had access to a quiet cosy rest area where they could sit away from noisy activities. These were fitted with soft seating in the form of child size couches, bean bags, cushions and colourful mats.
- Seasonal decorations lit up to provide visual stimulation for the Baby/Wobblers.

Supporting children's relationships:

- Staff members demonstrated warmth and sensitivity in their interactions with the children. Examples included a staff member from the Montessori care room acknowledging and comforting a child who did not want to meet Santa who was visiting the children.
- Scrapbooks belonging to each child, which had been put together by staff, were available in the care rooms for the children to view. These documented the children's individual interests and emergent curriculum throughout their time in the service. Examples included photographs, artwork and themed activity materials.
- A key-worker system was in place in the service with named staff members assigned the responsibility for creating relationships with a designated group of children and their parents. A staff member stated that they record individual observations of their key children.
- Many forms of communication with parents/guardians were stated as being in use, mainly verbally at drop off and pick up, as observed on the day, by phone and on a digital platform available on the service tablet and on a group messaging application.
- Staff stated meetings with management were held every 2 weeks. Details of the minutes of a meeting in October 2025 which included topics such as training, activities and the curriculum were furnished.

Programme of Activities:

- The learning environments in each care room were set up with clearly organised materials, storage and labelled resources in baskets/trays which were placed within easy reach of the children. These provided play opportunities to enhance the learning needs of all children across all developmental areas. Examples included children dressed in costumes as princesses and children's characters facilitating cognitive development through imaginative and role play.
- Ongoing observations of the children demonstrating their learning and development, linked to both the national curriculum and quality frameworks, were furnished to the inspector. These included details of the children's learning and included examples of artwork related to the curriculum themes.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one, group discussions, songs and storytelling which were observed throughout the day. Children in the Montessori care room were heard engaging with adults, who were sitting on the floor, in conversation identifying numbers and colours while a staff member engaged the children in a counting book. The children were heard singing Christmas songs to Santa who was visiting.

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:

- External doors were secured to prevent unauthorised adults from entering. Internal doors including the kitchen adult sanitary areas were secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- Window handles were located above adult height, out of reach of the children.
- The highchair in use in the Baby/Toddler room was fitted with a 5-point safety harness keeping children secure in the seat.
- Indoor and outdoor toys appeared to be in good condition and well maintained.
- Cleaning agents were stored on high shelving making them inaccessible to the children.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play areas was secured with high metal fencing and metal gates with sliding bolts ensuring that no child could leave the service unsupervised or that no unauthorised adult could enter the area.

Infection Control:

- Tables were sanitised before and after the serving of food to prevent cross contamination.
- Hand basins in the sanitary areas in use by the Baby/Toddler and Montessori sanitary areas were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, 36.2°C and 37.5°C, dispensing soap and dispensing paper towels. Pedal operated bins were in use for the disposal of paper waste.
- Nappy changing areas were supplied with single use aprons and gloves and pedal operated nappy bins were lined, lidded and sealed.
- Children’s personal belongings in the nappy changing area were stored in lidded boxes ensuring no cross contamination.
- A sterilising solution was available in the Baby/Toddler care room for sterilising soothers in use in the service.
- Picture reminders were displayed of hygienic hand-washing steps in the Montessori sanitary area.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed being administered in the service.
- Temperature reducing medication, in its original container, was available in the service. The expiry date was recorded as 11/27.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep checks were available from the Baby/Toddler and Junior Pre-school indicating that 10-minute physical sleep checks were being carried out with particulars including colour/pallor, breathing, position, room temperature and staff signatures.
- Adults remained in the Junior Pre-school room supervising the 8 children who were sleeping on stackable beds.
- Cots and stackable beds were placed more than 50 centimetres apart for safety and hygiene purposes.
- The temperature of the Baby/Toddler sleep room, where a child was aged under 12 months, was recorded as 18.3°C within the required temperatures of 16°C-20°C.
- Blind cords were secured out of reach of the children in the sleep rooms.

Fire Safety:

- Fire extinguishers were secured to the walls of the service with brackets.
- The fire assembly point, located a safe distance from the service, was visible in the outdoor play area.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for the 11 adults; however, 1 adult vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting' posing a potential risk for children. It was acknowledged that proof of application was received in the office of the inspectorate on 17 December 2025.
2. There were 2 unsecured adult sized doll's houses in both the Montessori and Junior Pre-school posing a risk of tipping or falling.
3. A broken toilet seat was observed in a toilet cubicle of the Montessori sanitary area posing a pinching risk.

Fire Safety:

4. There was a cot blocking the fire exit door in the Baby/Wobbler designated sleep room posing a safety risk in the event of an emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

The registered provider submitted the following statements:

1. Garda vetting is now on file for the adult for whom it was required. Safeguards are now in place which will highlight when garda vetting renewal for employees is due to ensure compliance in the future.
2. The adults sized doll's houses were removed and two child sized, wooden, doll's houses have been ordered. Staff will ensure in the future that equipment is secured to prevent tipping or falling.
3. The broken toilet seat in the Montessori sanitary area has been replaced. Staff will conduct daily checks to ensure that broken equipment and furniture is removed or replaced.

Fire Safety:

4. A cot has been removed and the area has reconfigured to ensure that the fire door in the Baby/Wobbler sleep area is unobstructed. Staff will carry out daily checks to ensure that the fire doors are kept clear.

Supporting documentation submitted

The following photographic and documentary evidence was received in the office of the inspectorate:

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting for the adult for whom it was required. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.
2. A receipt and photograph of the doll's houses. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

3. A photograph of the new fitting on the toilet seat. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Fire Safety:

4. Photographs of the newly arranged cots in the Baby/Wobbler sleep area. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider have addressed the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23.

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)
- (1) Documentary evidence in the form of the staff roster and First Aid Responder certificates (FAR) were available which indicated that 2 staff members were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR). In addition, 5 staff members had training in basic first aid.
- (2)
- (a) The well stocked first aid boxes were stored within easy reach of the adults in the care rooms.
- (b) The first aid boxes were available 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 firefighting 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) Monthly fire drills were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as 09 December 2025 with the previous monthly drills recorded on 18 November 2025 and 21 October 2025.
 - (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The recorded dates for both were noted as 16 October 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) The fire procedure notice was visible on the entrance wall of the service ensuring that the adults were aware of the steps to be followed in the event of an emergency to ensure the safety of the children and adults on the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation was available which indicated that the service had adequate insurance for the number of children and the type of service.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required.

Non-Compliance Information

(d) There were 3 damaged ceiling tiles in the Baby/Wobbler sanitary area; 1 tile was water damaged, a second tile on the ceiling of the Baby nappy changing area was broken and a third tile in the main sanitary area was also broken.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider:

(d) The 3 damaged ceiling tiles in the Baby/Wobbler sanitary area have been replaced.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d) Photographs of the replaced tiles were received in the office of the inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The actions taken and evidence submitted by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under Regulation 29.