

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015GY285
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Westside Creche & Preschool Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Westside Resource Centre, Seamus Quirke Road, Newcastle, Co. Galway
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<b>Eircode:</b>	H91 C1KX
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Carmel Mahon
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	13/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	33	PM	23
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulations Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A -Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Meehan and E. Friel.
<b>Title:</b>	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).	

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This community-based pre-school was established in 1998 and is in Westside resource centre. The service offers both an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) pre-school care and sessional care programmes from 9:00 am to 12:00 pm and 12:30 pm to 3:30 pm from Monday to Friday, for children aged between 1 and 6 years of age. The service caters for a maximum number of 42 pre-school children at any one time. There are 2 playrooms named the crèche playroom and the preschool playroom; the service converted the arts and crafts room into a sensory room. There is also a kitchenette and children’s sanitary area. Quiet rest areas are available in both playrooms to allow children to relax or opt out of an activity. The pre-school children can access a secure outdoor play area to the rear of the service for fresh air and play activities.

### Staffing

The service employs 11 staff, including 2 adults working under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM). In addition, there are 3 adults on a work placement scheme. 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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4).

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1), (2).

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child (1)(a).

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 – First Aid.

Regulation 26 - Fire Safety Measures.

Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise.
- (b) The staff roster indicated that both the designated person in charge and deputy was on the premises while the pre-school children were present.
- (c) A management structure was available in the service and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities. Both play rooms had room leaders.

- (2) Recruitment files were reviewed for all 15 adults including the registered provider:
- (a) There were 19 of the required 30 validated references from previous employers.
  - (b) The remaining 11 validated references were from sources other than past employers.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau were available for all 15 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 three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (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 on the National Framework for qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent. The registered provider and the 3 adults employed under the work placement scheme did not require qualifications. However, one of these adults had a level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education.
- (6A) The service received funding for 2 adults employed under the Access and Inclusion Model.

### Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) Two adults were missing overseas vetting disclosures. T overseas police vetting disclosures were missing in respect of 1 of these adults and 1 overseas police vetting disclosure was missing in respect of the second adult. Both adults had lived in states other than Ireland for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) One adult did not have evidence of a qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualification or a qualification deemed by the minister to be equivalent. Not having suitably qualified staff may compromise the safety of the children.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider responded to say that:

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

- 9(2)(d) All vetting procedures will be carried out prior to any adult working directly with children.
- (4) All vetting procedures will be carried out before working in the service.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

- 9(2)(d) One overseas police vetting disclosure in respect of 1 of the adults was received and 1 of 2 were received for the other adult.
- (4) The registered provider submitted evidence of a qualification for 1 adult.

## Summary Comment

9(2)(d) The documentation submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate has been reviewed and 1 of 2 police disclosures remains outstanding for 1 adult.

- (4) The Early Years Inspectorate received evidence that 1 adult had a childcare qualification and was deemed to have met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulation.

## 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 paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

### Compliance Information

- (1) Documentary evidence in the form of attendance records and staff rosters indicated that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children.
- (3) At all times during the period of the inspection, the registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children. There were 11 adults working directly caring for 33 pre-school children in the morning and there were 11 adults working directly with 23 children in the afternoon.

### 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;*
- (a) 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(15)(1)(a), (b), (c), (d), (e), (f), (g), (h) and (i).

A sample of 12 children's records were reviewed by the Early Years Inspectors.

The entries reviewed were factual, consistent, and accurate.

The 12 sampled records of children contained the following:

- The name and date of birth of the child.
- The date on which the child first attended 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 are 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.
  - Written parental or guardian consent was included to allow the child to have appropriate medical treatment if there was / is an emergency.
- (4) 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, and*

**Compliance Information**

- BASIC NEEDS:**
- The snacks were supplied by the parents were healthy and nutritious and consisted of sandwiches, crackers, cheese, fresh fruit pieces, yogurts with milk or water available to children when needed. Perishable items were stored in the service fridge.
  - Crockery and plates were offered and used during children’s snack times and were appropriate for the age and stage of development of the children.
  - All children attending the service who were toilet trained, toileted independently or with some assistance or support by adults as required.
  - Children in nappies had their nappy changed as required throughout the session.
  - The children’s self-care was assisted and encouraged by adults for example to wash their hands prior to eating, after toileting, after using a tissue and after messy play.
  - In the playrooms the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size couch in designated cosy area.
  - Cots were available for children who were under 2 years of age if required.
  - There was an outdoor play area to the rear of the premises which was sufficiently spacious to accommodate the numbers of children attending the service.

- The play equipment and materials provided in the outdoor area supported a range of physically energetic activities and play experiences.

### Supporting Relationships Around Children

- A key worker system was in operation in the service. This supported the adults to have more meaningful relationships with the children.
- The adults were observed to show the pre-school children kindness, respect and positive regard and were observed to praise and encourage the children during their activities.
- Regular communication and involvement with parents are encouraged by the service.
- The service had the different themes, links to resources for parents and rhymes that children were learning in the service displayed at the entrance to the service.
- The service was linked in to the County Childcare Committee for training support and networking purposes.

### Programme of Activities

- There was evidence of curriculum planning in place to support each child's development.
- Each child had a learning journal of the work that they had completed since the start of the year.
- Children's language development was encouraged; they were observed reading books and engaged with adults and other children on the content of the books. Children played in small groups with animal jigsaws and discussed with one another what animal they would like to make. At story time adults created an interactive experience for children, allowing them to share their views on stories that adults read to them.
- Through the programme of activities children had the opportunity to interact in small and large groups and encouraged by adults to take the lead and engage with their peers.
- Adults created an environment for easy transitions throughout the session. All transitions during the session involved the children, they took an active role in preparing, assisting the adults, taking the lead at snack time and tidying up. This in turn promoted each child's independence and leadership skills.
- Two children celebrated their birthdays on the day and these were enjoyed by the children and adults. Children sang birthday greetings, adults put up a birthday banner and children danced to music.

## 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:

- Adult only areas were secured from the preschool children during the inspection, the inspectors observed that the laundry and kitchen doors were closed to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- The main hallway and the fire exit area from the creche room were unobstructed.
- Earrings belonging to children were removed by an adult when entering the service to ensure the safety of all children.

##### Infection Control:

- Sanitary doors were closed during both sessions which reduced the risk of cross infection.
- The wooden nappy changing unit in the designated nappy changing area was maintained in a clean and hygienic manner.
- Childrens belongings were stored appropriately in the nappy changing area reducing the risk of cross infection.
- The 2 cots in the creche room were maintained 50 cm apart in the creche playroom.

#### Non-Compliance Information

- Garda vetting was available for 15 adults, however one of these vetting disclosures 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

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

The registered provider responded to say:

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

All vetting procedures and renewal of garda vetting will be carried out within the 3-year timeframe.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the renewed garda vetting was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate.

#### Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed and has been deemed to have met the regulatory requirements of this part of the Regulations.

### 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 11 adults were trained as First Aid Responders (FAR); the staff roster indicated that 9 adults with FAR were available during the opening hours of the service.
- (2)(a) (b) The well-equipped first aid boxes, available while the pre-school children were present, were stored within easy reach of the adults in the Creche and Pre-school playrooms.

### 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) Written records of the fire drills that took place in the service were furnished to the inspector. The last Date recorded for both the Creche and Pre-school play rooms was noted as 29 May 2025 with previous monthly drills recorded as 29 April and 26 March 2025.
- (b) Written records were available of the servicing of the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms. The firefighting certificate was dated 14 April 2025 and the smoke alarm certificate was dated 04/2025.

- (2)(c) The records referred to in paragraph (1) were available on the premises for review by the inspector.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were positioned on the walls of the play rooms.

## 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 of insurance documents were furnished to the inspector which included the following details;

- The contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 42
- The type of service: Sessional
- Separate building insurance was in place with an expiry date of 6 January 2026.