

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE058
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Name of Service:	Maynooth University Creche
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Address of Service:	Maynooth University, North Campus, Maynooth, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W23 A5Y6
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Name of Registered Provider:	Marianne Dunne
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	03/12/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	23
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Mulhern and R. Phillips
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Maynooth University Creche is privately owned and operated by the university. It provides a full day care service for children of staff and students attending the university. It opens Monday to Friday from 08:30 to 17:15 and can accommodate a maximum of 69 children aged 1-6 years.

The service operates from a purpose-built premises on the North campus. There are currently four pre-school rooms in use. Children attending the two younger rooms have access to two sleep rooms and a dining room. An additional room is used to accommodate children as they arrive in the morning. The premises includes sanitary facilities, a kitchen, an office and rooms that the person in charge reported are being renovated for use by children. An outdoor area is available at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are eight adults employed to work in the service including the person in charge. Six adults and a student were working directly with the children on the day of inspection with the person in charge available to assist as needed.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 19 (1)(b) and 23. As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Toddler 1 room, Toddler 2 room and Playroom.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a person in charge and a named person to deputise.
 - (b) The person in charge and deputy were on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure within the service. Staff demonstrated an awareness of their roles and responsibilities and the lines of authority.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) The inspection focused on references for eight staff members and a student. Appropriate references with records of verification were available for all the adults.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in relation to one adult. The vetting was due for renewal on 5 November 2025. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) International police vetting was available for all adults whom it was required.

(4) All staff held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Part in respect of the age range of the children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.

particular reference number 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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. There were 6 staff members and a student working directly with 23 children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for at least two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

Appropriate and suitable practices were observed throughout the inspection. The children played freely within their rooms. They were dressed in outdoor gear appropriate to the weather when playing outside. Meals and snacks were provided at regular intervals. The children brought one of their snacks from home and all other food was provided by the service. The younger children ate in a dining area and wore bibs to protect their clothing from getting soiled or wet. Drinks of water were available in each room and milk was offered with the main meal. The adults sat with the children during meals and snacks and supported them towards independence. Staff demonstrated a good knowledge of the children in their care including their food preferences and allergies and made accommodations for these.

Children wearing nappies had these changed at routine times and promptly in between when required. Children using the toilet were supported towards independence with staff guiding them on appropriate care including handwashing. An area was available in each room where children could rest or take a break from activities. Cot rooms were available for younger children to sleep, and older children had use of low beds. All children were provided with an opportunity to sleep after dinner. Staff reported that children can sleep outside of the routine times if they show signs of tiredness.

All staff interactions with children were observed to be kind and respectful. An app was used to record information in relation to individual children including nappy changes, sleep, and meals. Staff reported this is shared with parents in real time and it provides for two-way communication to support continuation of care.

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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Entrances were secured to prevent unauthorised access. Equipment was well maintained. The kitchen was inaccessible to children and hazardous items including cleaning products, medicines and cables were secured out of children's reach. Emergency exits were kept clear, and staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to evacuate safely in the event of a fire.

Infection Control:

Measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises and equipment appeared clean and well-maintained. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff guided children to wash their hands at appropriate times including after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play. Pedal operated bins were in place to manage waste appropriately. Each child had their own individual bed linen which staff reported is sent home for laundering every Friday.

Administration of Medication:

Staff demonstrated an awareness of how to administer medicine safely if required. Emergency medication was available for a child whom staff reported was at risk of anaphylaxis due to allergies. Supporting documents were provided including parent consent and the procedure to follow should the medicine be required. The staff were able to describe the signs of anaphylaxis and the actions to take in accordance with the documents. Staff brought the medicine to the dining room with the child at mealtime to ensure it was easily accessible. They reported how any medicine given should be recorded including the dose, time given, the person who gave it and the person who witnessed.

Safe Sleep:

Appropriate facilities were available for sleep. Two dedicated sleep rooms were available with cots for children under the age of two years. Standard cots were in use with appropriately fitting mattresses and bed linen. The

room temperatures were maintained between 18-20° C. Low beds with appropriate linen were available for children over the age of two years.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for one adult. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. An exit door situated in the dining room where children from the Toddler 1 and Toddler 2 rooms ate their meal had a low level, thumb-turn lock which could be opened by a child. This led directly onto the university campus which could pose a risk if a child were to leave unsupervised. It is acknowledged that the children were closely supervised during the inspection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been updated. A clear visual reminder of vetting end dates will be posted in the office. Staff will also be reminded to be mindful of end dates.
2. Health and safety office are engaged with contractors to fit a secondary measure on the doors to secure the door from being opened by children.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Copy of required Garda vetting disclosure dated 5 January 2026.
2. Copy of e-mail from university safety officer to designated person in charge dated 7 January 2026. E-mail states contractors have been engaged, equipment is being sourced and work will be completed as soon as possible.

Summary Comment

1. The requirement has been met.
2. The actions should address the non-compliance. This will be assessed on the next inspection.

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) A person with a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a trained person to always be available to the children.

(2)

(a) The service had a suitably equipped first aid box which was stored in a conspicuous position in the corridor.

(b) The first aid box was always available for use by staff.

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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(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) The service had a record of fire drills carried out. The most recent fire drill was dated 12 November 2025.
- (b) Records were available detailing the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The certificates of maintenance were dated 18 July 2025 and 5 September 2025 respectively.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in conspicuous positions.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed to be appropriately supervised throughout the inspection. This included within the pre-school rooms, when eating, when using the sanitary facilities, when playing outdoors, and when transitioning between different areas of the premises.