

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LH014
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Name of Service:	Cheeky Monkey Early Years Limited
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Address of Service:	Ardee Parish Centre, Hale Street, Ardee, Co. Louth
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Eircode:	A92 X5DE
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Name of Registered Provider:	Adell Woods
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	43	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
Inspection undertaken by:	S Taaffe
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
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Description of service

Cheeky Monkey Early Years Limited is a privately-owned early years service which has been in operation since 2007, accommodating pre-school children aged 2½ - 6 years on a sessional basis and school aged children up to 12 years of age. Eligible pre-school children are facilitated to participate in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme each morning and each afternoon with the option provided for the children to avail of an extra 30 minutes for an additional fee. Cheeky Monkey Early Years Limited is conducted from a spacious community centre in Ardee with 3 care rooms in operation in the service. Room 1 and Room 2 are located on the lower level and Room 3 is located on ground floor level with entrances to the premises provided on both levels. There are two separate designated outdoor play areas, one of which is located at the entrances to Room 1 and Room 2 and a second area located adjacent to Room 3. The sanitary accommodation provided for the children and staff attending Cheeky Monkey Early Years Limited is located off the corridor which adjoins Room 3.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service on a daily basis, coordinating the day to day operational management and assisting in the care of the pre-school and school age children when necessary. The registered provider employs a deputy manager and a further 6 staff members, all of whom work directly with the pre-school children. Another staff member who holds an appropriate childcare qualification normally works with school age children in the service but also provides relief cover caring for the pre-school children when necessary. A student is being facilitated to undertake a work experience placement in the service, working with the pre-school children under supervision in a supernumerary capacity whilst undergoing a childcare course leading to a combined Level 5 and 6 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ).

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 announced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – record of pre-school child.

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, 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

(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 of the service and there was a named person available to deputise when required.

(b) The designated deputy person in charge was present in the service when the inspector arrived at the service. The registered provider arrived on the premises shortly afterwards, both remaining in the service for the duration of the inspection.

A total of 10 staff files were reviewed, maintained in respect of the registered provider, the 8 staff members and the student who was on a work experience placement in the service.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the 10 adults who work or were present in the service.

(a) Eleven written references were from past employers.

(b) Nine written references were from sources other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the registered provider, all 8 staff members and for the student. Each of these records demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) In relation to the 10 files reviewed, international police vetting was available as required for 2 staff members who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) The registered provider and all 8 adults employed in the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 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.

Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the early years service.

(3) The minimum adult/child ratio was maintained throughout the inspection.

- In Room 1 there were 17 children aged 3 years 9 months to 4 years 6 months being cared for by 3 staff members, one of whom was employed to reduce the adult to child ratio in this room in a post funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.
- In Room 2 there were 18 children aged 2 years 7 months to 3 years 5 months being cared for by 3 staff members. Additionally, a student was present in this room on the day of inspection, being facilitated to work under supervision in a supernumerary capacity, as part of an early years work experience placement.
- In Room 1 there were 8 children aged 3 years 6 months to 4 years 4 months being cared for by 3 staff members.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children’s records. Twelve registration forms were sampled from a total of 49 and were found to be appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

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

(1)(a) The following are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic Needs of the Children:

- The staff members were caring and kind and were observed working collaboratively together which created a warm and child-focused atmosphere for the children in the service. The staff members demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child's stories, questions and their non-verbal cues and responded to the children in an interested and engaged manner.
- Children brought their own healthy packed lunches and drinks from home to the service, in keeping with the service's healthy eating policy. The registered provider and staff members sat and chatted with the children during snack time, encouraging conversation and extending interactions in a sociable manner. Drinking water was accessible to the children both indoors and outdoors throughout the inspection.
- The staff members were observed to be responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision and assistance provided when required.
- The registered provider and staff members were observed displaying anticipation and positive responsiveness when children experienced challenges in the environment or chose to change or opt out of activities.
- All children played outdoors on the day of inspection.

Supporting Relationships around Children

- The registered provider and staff members were observed using welcoming facial expressions and warm vocal tones when engaging with the children and showed a keen interest in what each child was doing. The adults were observed affirming and offering meaningful praise and encouragement to the children for their efforts and involvement in activities.
- The children in the service were encouraged to value and respect each other as evidenced in the adults praising the children for kind actions, sharing, taking turns and saying please and thank you. The service placed an emphasis on supporting the children to recognise and to become aware of their emotions with books and posters used to support the children in this regard, in addition to supportive interactions and discussions about feelings heard taking place between the adults and children during the inspection.

- In both the indoor and outdoor play environments the registered provider and staff members were observed following the children’s lead and engaging in play and activities with the children at an individual, small group and large group level. Children’s language development was supported through one to one interactions, group discussions, action and movement songs, and storytelling which were observed during the course of the inspection.
- A range of approaches were implemented to ensure regular two-way communication took place with the parents and there was evidence of strong family engagement with the service. Examples of this included information being shared with parents informally at drop-off and collection times on a daily basis, and details of curricular-themed activities accompanied with photographs of the children engaged in activities being shared electronically with the parents on the service’s digital App. Parents were formally invited to attend the service before Christmas and again during spring-time each year to discuss the children’s progress and development and to review the children’s learning stories.

Physical and material environment:

- The three care rooms were set up in clearly defined interest areas which were equipped with a broad range of developmentally appropriate play materials to support children’s play and learning. The children had free access to open-ended, creative, sensorial, real and natural materials. The interest areas included home corners containing wooden kitchen units equipped with real world packaging, utensils and appliances; art trolleys on wheels which the children brought to their tables to use when they wished; construction areas and well-resourced library areas. It was evident that each area had been carefully considered by the staff members to ensure they were visually stimulating and inviting for children.
- Sensorial play was readily facilitated in the service. The children were observed engaging in sensory play experiences in each of the three rooms throughout the session. For example, on the inspector’s unannounced arrival to Room 1 at the start of the inspection, a number of children were playing at a spacious tray-top table set up with sand made from flour, oil and yellow paint; coloured blue water; shells, and a large number of plastic sea creatures and marine plants. Playdough was made in the service and scented with lavender and cinnamon, in addition to standard sand tables and water tables provided in each room.
- The library areas in each room contained a broad number of books to support the children’s language development and provide choice for storytelling.
- A range of specialist Montessori equipment was provided in each room.

- Representations of the children, their families and their learning experiences were very visible in the service as evidenced through the broad range of photographs on display.
- There were two separate outdoor play areas available to the pre-school children attending the service, in close proximity to and generally designated for use by the children accommodated in the adjoining rooms. The paved outdoor play area on the lower ground level contained a covered sand table well-resourced with sand, shells and digging implements; a low level slide; an outdoor kitchen; a lidded storage box with cars and trucks; benched seating; wall-mounted blackboards and balls. The other outdoor play area located adjacent to Room 3 was fully surfaced with impact-absorbent material and contained two well-resourced lidded sand tables; an outdoor kitchen; ride-on toys; a low level slide; a sit-in wooden car with steering wheels; benched seating; and wall-mounted blackboards and slanted guttering.

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

The following are examples of the measures undertaken by the registered providers and staff members to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service:

General Safety:

- The entrance doors leading into the premises were secured to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised or an unauthorised adult from entering the service. Push button digital locks were in place on the doorways leading into the care rooms.
- The two separate outdoor play areas were enclosed which ensured that a child could not leave unaccompanied. The sloped grassy areas adjoining the steps leading up to the car park from the entrances to Room 1 and Room 2 were secured with fencing while an additional length of plastic fencing was slid into place at the bottom of the steps when children were playing outside to fully enclose the space.
- The warm water temperature in the taps in the sanitary accommodation and the care rooms in the service did not exceed the maximum safe water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

- Children were accompanied by a staff member when using the toilet facilities which were located on the ground floor, off the corridor leading to Room 3.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Refrigerators were available in the care rooms and these were used to store the children's snacks provided from home, which reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet and following messy play and outdoor play. There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels available for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the service.
- Tissues were available for wiping noses and suitable bins are provided in the service to facilitate the hygienic disposal of waste.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were maintained electronically in the service and the premises was visibly clean.

Administration of Medication:

- No child attending the service required any medication to be administered on the day of inspection. Administration of medication forms were available in electronic format to record the details of any medication administered in the service, should the need arise.

Fire Safety:

- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.

Outings:

- The registered provider stated that pre-school children do not go on outings from the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present on a software App on electronic tablet devices in each care room, noting each child's arrival and departure times.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians, employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained and on arrival the inspector was requested to record her attendance on the premises and the purpose of her visit.

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) The registered provider and all 8 staff members held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training which easily ensured that a person with FAR training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes available in the service were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous locations on the premises and were available for the children in attendance, in the event of an emergency.

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.

(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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated and staff members reported that fire drills were carried out monthly.

(b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in January 2024 and the smoke detection system on 26/06/2024.

(4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed in the care rooms and corridors on the premises, containing details of the procedures to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had insurance cover in place for 51 pre-school and school age children attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured until 27/03/2025.