

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD050
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Name of Service:	Mercy Pre-School Ltd.
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Address of Service:	Military Road, Waterford City, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 WDN7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Richard Hannigan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	05/06/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate. Ely hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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

This part time service is in the grounds of the Mercy National School in Waterford city. A service is provided to children 2 to 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:50 and 12:50. The premises is a detached building consisting of four early years rooms, entrance hallways and toilets. The children also have access to an outdoor area to the rear of the service for the exclusive use of the preschool service.

Staffing

There are 13 staff employed in the service, including the manager who was present on the day of inspection. All staff held the minimum of level 5 and above in early childhood care and education 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

Compliance was assessed under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 management and recruitment

Regulation 11 staffing levels

Regulation 19 health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 first aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety

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 inspector wishes 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*

(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)(b)

The manager was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Following a discussion with the manager and on review of documentation, it was established that there were 13 staff employed in the service. All staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection. All required written and validated references were available on file in the service.

(c)

There was evidence of Garda vetting available on file in the service for all staff members. The service had demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice to renew Garda vetting every 3 years for all staff.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4) Staff who were working directly with the preschool children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)

There was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children at all times during the duration of the inspection.

(2)

There were 39 children 3 to 6 years in the care of 9 staff.

The manager was also available to assist in the rooms if required.

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 manager ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. There were birthday walls with the children's photos and dates of their birthdays displayed. Staff had taken the time to display a collage of photos depicting all the people in the community who help the children. For example, there were photos of a guard, a lolly pop lady, and an ambulance driver. There was a photo montage of children in the service who had been taught how to cross the road safely. Staff who spoke to the inspector said this exercise was developed to make the children aware of the hazards on the road as the service was located in an inner city location with busy traffic congestion.

There was a dolls house in room 1 with miniature furniture dolls and utensils. The inspector noted the children handled this toy with care and staff encouraged them to have respect for the house to allow all the children to enjoy playing with it.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, by putting on their own coats before they went outside to play and finding their own bags before going home time home.

Staff had gathered the children's art work, photos of the children doing various activities and observations they had made on the children and glued them into books called learning journals. The inspector noted the staff had taken great care and attention in presenting the children's experience in the service in these learning journals.

The materials and equipment available throughout the three rooms in operation on the day of the inspection included, supplies of paints, crayons and paper to paint and colour on, jigsaws, plastic brick, small world figures, cars, tractors, and dinosaurs. The play equipment throughout the service was well organised and easily accessible to children.

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:

The main entrance to the service was secure on arrival and remained secure for the duration of the inspection. Access was gained to the service by ringing the bell. All cleaning agents were stored on shelves which were inaccessible to children. The playground to the rear of the service was safe, suitable and secure.

Infection control:

The service had an infection control policy. All preschool rooms and toilets appeared to be clean and well maintained on the day of inspection. Hand washing was attended to regularly on the day of inspection. Children were observed being supervised to wash their hands after using the toilet.

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)
There was a person trained in a first aid responder course available to the children in the service. There were four staff trained in a first aid responder course working in the service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending 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.
- (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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in service in May 2025.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in December 2025, and the wired smoke alarm in August 2024.

(4)

There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was adequate insurance in place to cover the number of children the service was registered to accommodate.