

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW201
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Name of Service:	Little Poppets Creche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	99 Woodstock, Cooldross Lane , Kilcoole, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	A63 HR74
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sacha Behan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	17
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, Co. Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon
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).

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Description of service

This full day care service is located in a residential area in Kilcoole village. The service provides full day-care, part-time day care and a sessional service to pre-school children who are presently aged between 1 and 6 years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 07:30 and 18:30. A school age service is also provided. The premises is located in a detached two storey purpose-built centre. Three care rooms are available namely, The Bobblers room downstairs and the Playschool room and Montessori room upstairs.

Staffing

Ten adults are employed, one of whom is the chef. On the day of inspection five adults provided direct care to the pre-school children. Additionally, the registered provider was also present and available to give assistance in the rooms 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.

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-

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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.

Statutory Notice

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN	20/04/2026	On inspection it was noted that between 1.45pm and 2.15pm and between 2.45pm and 3.15pm there was no adult present with a qualification in First Aid Response. This poses a risk to the children attending if a child required first aid during the above times.
Status	A response to the Improvement Notice was received on 24/04/2026 and accepted.	

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-

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- (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 has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the Inspection team and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- A total of four adults were employed since the last inspection. These four files were inspected.
- (a)&(b) There were seven written references available for staff. Five of these references were validated.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all ten staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for two new staff members who had lived in another state for a period longer than six consecutive months as an adult.
- (4)
- Three staff members employed since last inspection held 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.

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Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a)(b)
1. A second reference was not available for one staff member.
 2. Two references which were available for one staff member were not validated.
- (4)
3. There was no evidence that one new staff member held 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.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (2)
- (a)(b)
1. A second reference has been obtained for the staff member in question.
 2. The two references available but not validated have since been validated.
- All staff files shall be maintained and kept up to date and to make sure that references are all up to date and validated.
3. A transcript from the college from this staff member has been requested in the meantime until she receives her Level 5 QQI certificate in Early Years Care and Education. It was in an emergency situation due to low staff availability and also a member of staff who called in sick at the last minute. We will avoid this happening again.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Copy of second reference and evidence of validation.
2. Evidence of validation of two references.
3. A copy of a letter from the staff member's college stating that she is on course to pass all modules of Level 5 certificate in Early Years Care and Education and is awaiting confirmation from QQI regarding this.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 9.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

(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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1)
Throughout the inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the pre-school children. There were 26 children attending the service being supervised by 5 adults on the day of inspection.

(2)
The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the inspection

Non-Compliance Information

(8)(a)
Between 08:00 and 08:30 on the day of inspection there was one adult in the premises.
It is acknowledged and was evident from the staff roster that there were two adults due to be present during this time. However, due to late notice of sickness the second adult was not present.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In future this situation will not happen again as the next member of staff that is due to arrive will be asked to come in at the earlier time to give cover making sure that there are 2 staff members on the premises.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 11.

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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

(1)(b)

The inspector observed that staff were attentive to the personal care of the children. The children's nappies were changed routinely and if needed in between. Bibs were provided when eating to protect their clothes from becoming soiled or wet. Their noses, hands and faces were cleaned when needed. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm individual engagement with the children.

Staff sat with the children when eating. They provided them with help when needed whilst supporting their independence. Drinks of water were offered regularly and were always available. Children attending the Bobblers room had individual routines for food and sleep which mirrored their home routines.

The children attending the Bobblers room were placed to sleep according to their individual routine or when they displayed signs of tiredness. Children attending the other rooms who required sleep slept on sleep mats in their rooms at a designated time. The atmosphere in the rooms while children were sleeping was calm. Children's outer clothing was removed, and blankets were provided. Staff provided the children with reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. The children who had soothers were offered these.

Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed them by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. The staff comforted the children when they became upset - holding them and talking to them in soft tones.

All children attending the creche spent time in the outdoor area during the day. Staff were observed playing games with them and supervised them while using the toys and equipment provided in the outdoor area. Minor incidences between children were handled well by staff using distraction and re-direction to resolve any issues.

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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 external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed. The procedure for evacuation was on display in each room.
- All cleaning agents were kept out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Each child's soother was stored in individual containers.
- Cleaning schedules were maintained in each care room and the environment was clean.

Administration of Medication:

- The procedure for the safe administration of medication was adhered to when one child required anti-febrile medication during the inspection. Written parental consent was available should temperature reducing medication be required to be administered to a child.
- Medication was stored in a safe place and was in date.

Safe Sleep:

- On the day of inspection, a sleep log was maintained every 10 minutes by staff detailing the physical checks carried out on sleeping children under 2 years of age.
- The temperature of the sleep room and the care rooms where children slept was in the acceptable range.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The side door leading to the rear of the premises was secured with a latch located at a height which was accessible from outside the premises. This posed a danger of unauthorised access into the outdoor area.
2. In the outdoor area used by the children from the playschool room the door from a playhouse was missing exposing sharp plastic sides which could pose a risk of injury to a child.

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Infection Control:

3. In the outdoor area used by the children attending the Montessori room there was no cover on a sand/clay digging area. This posed a risk as it could be contaminated by animal excreta.

Safe Sleep:

4. In the Bobblers room one child aged 22 months slept on a mattress in their room. Sleep beds must be provided for all children who are less than two years of age.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. There is a bolt also on the side gate, this will be bolted along with the high latch. Staff members have been notified that the bolt on the side gate to the rear of the garden must be bolted in conjunction with the latch to avoid unauthorised access to the rear garden.
2. The playhouse has been removed from the garden.

Infection Control:

3. A lid has been made for the sand/clay digging area and placed on top.

Safe Sleep:

4. All children aged 1-2 years will sleep on the new sleep beds which have been purchased with immediate effect.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the bolt in place on the side gate.
2. photographic evidence to confirm that the playhouse has been removed.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence of the new lid in place covering the sand/clay digging area.

Safe Sleep:

4. Photographic evidence of the sleep bed in place in the bobbles room.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliances as identified on inspection in relation to Regulation 23.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

- (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

(2)(a)

The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position next to the pre-school room.

(b)

At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending the pre-school 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 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 in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 5th of February 2026.

(b) Records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms which were both dated February 2026.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27th of March 2027. The insurance provides cover for up to 45 children attending for full day care.