

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX008
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Name of Service:	Askamore Childcare Centre CLG
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Address of Service:	Askamore, Gorey, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y25 F6D8
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan O'Rafferty
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Service type:	Full day care, part time, sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/05/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Primary Care Centre, Castle Park, Arklow, Co. Wicklow Y14 AE10
Inspection undertaken by:	L O' Connor and N Thornton
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

Askamore Childcare Centre CLG is a full day care service located in Askamore, Co. Wexford. The service operates from purpose-built premises. It is registered to accommodate 70 children aged 0 to 6 years old and operates from 8am to 6pm Monday to Friday. There are four care rooms within the service: the Baby room (0 to 2 years), Toddler room (1 to 3 years), Butterfly room (2.5 years to 4 years) and Ladybird room (3 to 5 years).

The service has two sleep rooms, one adjoining the baby room and a second adjoining the toddler. There are three outdoor areas; one is adjoining the Toddler room, the second area is adjoining the Butterfly room, and the third area is an enclosed space to the front of the service.

Staffing

The service employs seventeen adults; this includes the registered provider. The registered provider does not routinely work in the care rooms. Of the seventeen adults, fourteen adults work directly with the children and two adults are employed for administrative duties. On the day of inspection, there were eleven adults in the service, and nine adults were working directly with the children.

The staff members working directly with the children 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.

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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management and recruitment, Regulation 11 -Staffing, Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child, Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play, Regulation 21 Equipment and materials, Regulation 22 Food and drink, Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child and Regulation 25 - First Aid. However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29 Premises and Regulation 30 Minimum space requirements. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was triggered by information which was submitted to the inspectorate.

A referral was made to the Fire Officer on 09 May 2025 due to potential fire safety risks within the service.

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
- (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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.

- (b) The deputy person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived at the service shortly after the inspector's arrival.
- (c) The service had the management structure posted on a display board. This was reflective of the roles undertaken by staff members within the service on the day of inspection. In discussion, staff members were familiar with adults with key roles and responsibilities within the service. The roles and responsibilities of staff members were communicated to parents through the parent's handbook.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that two adults commenced employment since the previous inspection. These files were reviewed and the following was noted:
- (a)(b) Written validated references were available for the two adults from a previous employer and/or a source other than a previous employer.
- (c) The required Garda Vetting disclosures were in place for the two adults. The renewal of Garda Vetting was not required for any staff member within the service as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) The registered provider had determined that police vetting was not required for the new staff members.
- (4) A qualification of 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 was required for one adult and it was available.

Non-Compliance Information

- (3) Recruitment and vetting procedures were not carried in full in advance of appointment of staff members. The registered provider did not consider Garda Vetting for one staff member prior to their appointment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) The registered provider has allocated one of the administration staff to oversee the upkeep of all staff files. Garda vetting will be applied for and obtained prior to the commencement of employment and references and other relevant documents will be checked.

Supporting documentation submitted

A staff file checklist

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 9 Management and recruitment and it will be assessed on the next inspection.

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 adults present within the service. On arrival, there were eleven adults within the present. Nine of these adults worked directly with the children, and two adults had administrative roles. The registered provider and another adult arrived at the service shortly after the commencement of the inspection. In discussion with staff members, it was outlined that support was available from other staff members within care rooms when required. For example, one staff member was providing support as required, between the Baby room and the Butterfly room on the day of inspection during mealtimes and nappy changes.
- (2) The adult to child ratio was maintained during the morning of the inspection. On arrival, the following was in place in the four care rooms.
 - In the Ladybird room, there were two adults working with seventeen children aged 2 to 5 years.
 - In the Butterfly room, there were twenty-three children aged 2 to 5 years with three adults.
 - In the Toddler room, two adults were working with fourteen children aged 18 months to 3 years.
 - In the Baby room, there were two adults with six children aged 1 to 2 years.

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

(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)(a)(b)

The staff members were familiar with individual children's preferences. In discussion with the staff members in the baby room, they outlined that prior to the children attending the service parents provide staff with information about the child. This included the child's sleep and mealtime routine. The staff member was familiar with the care needs of the individual children and discussed these with the inspector. The children's preferences for sleep were outlined. This practice was reflective of the service's safe sleep policy which outlined that the child's usual sleeping practices are known, and that sleep is based on children's need, choices and routine.

Children were provided with opportunities to engage in varying types of play throughout the inspection within each of the care rooms. For example, the staff member in the baby room outlined that the children enjoyed dress up and looking at themselves in the mirror. The children were observed to place hats on their heads while the younger children engaged with the varying textures and colours of materials in the dress up box.

The service's policy outlined that outdoor play was an important part of the daily curriculum at the service. The children from the Baby, Toddler, Butterfly and Ladybird rooms engaged in play in the outdoor area at various times during the inspection. The staff members outlined that each of the three outdoor areas were used dependant on the age and stage of the children. For example, the children from the baby room engaged in outdoor play in the area adjoining the Toddler room. The children from the Toddler room played in this area too and the grass area at the front of the service. While the children from the Butterfly and Ladybird rooms played in the area adjoining the Butterfly room. In discussion with staff members, they confirmed that children are provided with daily access to the outdoors.

The interactions observed between staff members and children were responsive and caring. Staff members engaged with the children with warm tones and provided reassurance when needed. For example, in the baby room staff were observed to warmly engage with the children using their names and conversation. The staff members were observed to sit on the floor with the younger children. This was reflective of the service's managing behaviour policy which outlined that staff adopt a reciprocal and positive relationship with the children. The staff member in the baby room was observed to soothe children to sleep in the adult's chair and then place them into the cot. Soothers were only observed to be used when children were sleeping.

The staff in the Toddler room were observed to respond to children's needs promptly with nappy changing carried out regularly and as required. Staff communicated to the children prior to taking the child for nappy changes while talking softly and engaging in conversations with them.

Staff were observed to ensure that children were clean, dry and comfortable after nappy changing and offered to support children who were toileting independently with personal care if the child voiced the need for assistance.

Staff were observed to record individual children's meals, sleep patterns, nappy changes.

The transitions for mealtimes were seamless within the baby room. Mealtimes in the baby room were unhurried and calm. Children were observed to eat their food in the highchairs and when the staff member noticed that a child had finished their food, the children returned to their play. During this time, the staff member provided the children with an insight to what was happening next. For example, 'are you finished your food? Will we wash your face and hands so you can go play?'. This provided the children with an expectation of what would happen next. This sense of knowing supports the development of positive relationships between the children and staff members. Following mealtime children were provided an opportunity for play. When placing one of the children onto the soft floor mat, the staff member playfully acknowledged the child's achievement of pulling themselves to stand up and standing on their own. The staff member provided the child with play equipment and exclaimed 'you love these, don't you?'. This practice as outlined in the service's curriculum policy supports children to learn in a responsive and supportive environment.

Staff members were familiar with the children's abilities and preferences. For example, two of the children within the baby room were developing the skill to stand and walk. The staff members playfully acknowledged the children's attempts and achievements during the day. In discussion with staff members, it was outlined that

children were transitioned into care rooms based on the individual needs and stage of development of the child. For example, transitions were planned to take developmental factors of the child and their abilities into consideration and based on the room the child was transitioning to.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

1. The dinnertime observed within the Butterfly and Ladybird rooms did not provide the children with an opportunity for a positive or calm social experience. In discussion with the staff members, they explained that the service's food provision practices had recently changed. On the day of inspection, inspectors observed that the mealtime was focused on the reheating and distribution of meals to the children. This led to children sitting for a long period waiting for their meal.
 - a. In the Ladybird room, one staff member was reheating dinners consecutively while a second staff member sat with the ten children remaining in the service for part-time or full day care. Some children were still waiting for their meal, while others were at different stages of eating or were waiting for their dinners to cool down as they were too hot post reheating.
 - b. Similar practices were also observed during dinnertime in the Butterfly room. Between 12.30pm to 1.30pm, there was four staff members and 23 children aged 3 to 5 years in the room. During this time, one staff member was re-heating food for approx. 60 minutes, and another staff member sat at the table with children who were eating their dinner or waiting for their dinner to be re-heated. Staff members intermittently requested children to sit at the table while other children continued playing. This environment within the Butterfly room was distracting for children who were eating. For example, at 12.45pm, a staff member requested a child to get their water bottle from the drinks table. The child was observed to return with their water bottle and the child was gazing to the other children who were building a tower with wooden blocks. A few moments later, the child proceeded to carry their dinner, place it into the cubby hole with their personal belongings and join their peers to play. This went unnoticed by the staff member sitting at the table.
2. The children in the baby room were not provided with an opportunity for self-feeding at snack time and dinnertime. Through providing children with an opportunity to self-feed it develops skills of independence

and a sense of achievement. This was at variance with the service's policy which outlined that children are encouraged to feed themselves as appropriate to their age and stage of development.

3. It is acknowledged that the registered provider provided a sample of documents to demonstrate how the service communicates with parents, which included monthly newsletters on curriculum themes, healthy food policy changes, and seasonal activities.

However, the inspectors observed that measures to develop and sustain the relationship between the service and parents were limited. The service did not practice their own partnership with parent's policy or parent's handbook. The following was noted:

- a. The service had a settling in policy which stated that if parents were experiencing challenges in relation to their child settling into the service, the staff would work with parents in assisting in making the transition as calm as possible for the children. However, in discussion the procedure for a child transitioning into the service was unclear. For example, staff members outlined that an open day had recently taken place for parents to view the baby room. While it was outlined that information was shared from the parents to the service regarding the child's routine and that the staff members could phone the parents, in a review of the parents' handbook, a procedure on how new children attending the service are settled in was not evident.
- b. The service's healthy eating policy outlined that a written record is maintained by the service of what a child has eaten during the day. It outlined that staff members inform parents what the child has eaten during the day and especially if the child has not eaten. While a record was maintained in the Baby and Toddler room, a record was not maintained for the Butterfly or Ladybird rooms. In discussion with staff members in the Butterfly room on how children's eating preferences or mealtimes are shared with parents, it was outlined that the food would be seen by the parent in the children's bag. This practice does not support relationships between the service and parents as information regarding children's individual food preferences may not be shared.
- c. The policy outlined that the service has an open-door policy. However, in discussion with staff members, parents have not entered the service for collections and/or drop off since the pandemic. This was observed by the inspectors on the day of inspection. The staff member outlined that

parents use the buzzer system, and a staff member will bring or collect the child from the main door or the gate to Montessori 1 at collection and drop off times.

- d. The service's partnership with parent's policy outlined that the service recognises the importance of working in partnership with parents to promote the best interests of children. The practices of a regular two-way exchange and the daily sharing of information with parents at drop off and collection times was not observed. The practices observed within the baby room did not support the continuity of care or the development of relationships between the parent and the service. For example:

One staff member consistently cared for the group of children in the baby room, including the completion of their daily records. The child was brought to the front door to their parent by a staff member who did not work in the care room on that day and was only present in the room for a short duration that evening. Consequently, this staff member was not aware of any information, updates or insights to provide to the parent. In discussion, staff members outlined that a photograph of the child's records were sent to the child's parents after they were collected. This practice does not promote the development and strengthening of relationships or the informal sharing of information between the service and the parent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service took the decision to outsource meals of hot dinners, lunches and teas from a reputable food establishment. The registered provider understands on the day of the inspection, there was a delay in heating of children meals which caused a slightly busier environment for staff and for children, thus not providing a calm or positive social experience for children. There will no longer be an issue of reheating dinners as meals will be provided by outsourced company.

This will also help to ensure that all children are sitting and eating together with no distractions, thus providing more social and enjoyable experience for all children. During mealtimes children will be invited to set the tables with table cloths and utensils to be used during mealtimes, each child will be asked to obtain their drinks bottle from the drinks table and take a seat at their table. Tables will be allocated into groups and a staff member will be designated to each table to ensure mealtimes are monitored at all

times. During meal times staff members will also sit and eat a snack or lunch while children are enjoying their snacks or meals. This will promote a more enjoyable, relaxed, social environment for children and staff.

The manager or the assistant manager on duty will ensure that mealtime routines are adhered to by all staff.

2. Children in the baby room are encouraged to self feed during morning snacktime, a snack is provided by parents which usually consists of fruit, rice cakes, crackers, yogurts (given children in the babys rooms age 6-18 months) yogurts are fed to younger babies, whereas older babies between 12-18 months are encouraged to self feed during all mealtimes, but at times, also need assistance in feeding. Older children in the baby room are encouraged to self-feed and provided with the utensils to self-feed themselves whilst being supported and monitored by staff members. The service will encourage children to partake in self-feeding where possible.

Going forward mealtimes in Baby room will also be monitored by the manager or assistant manager on duty.

3. The following actions were submitted by the registered provider in response to the finding:
 - a. The service tries to accommodate parents as much as possible when settling in children. The procedure of children settling into the service is completed over the course of 3 to 4 weeks which involves a week of short visits of 30 minutes. This brief visit allows children a short time to detach from parents and evidently get use to staff members. The visits are tailored to each child's individual need. These visits are then increased over the number of weeks for each child, given that some child may take longer than others to settle in a new environment. The service understands that a complete procedure of settling in for children is not outlined in parent's handbook as details but it is explained to parents and is explained in detail in our main policies and procedures which are available to parents on request. The full procedure for children settling in is available for parent upon request and the service are updating the parent's handbook to reflect the same.

The registered provider will monitor that the service is practising their own partnership with parent's policy and parent's handbook. The management will review all policies and parent's handbook on a quarterly basis.

- b. The Baby and Toddler food logs will continue. For the children in the Butterfly and Ladybird room, the staff members will provide parents with details and a description of children's food intake during the day. The service communicated this with parents through a letter on 29 August 2025, and the service's healthy eating policy was updated.
- c. The service had operated a closed door since the pandemic, as the service did not feel in a position to operate an open-door policy as the service found children settling better into their daily routine when drop off was at the door. However, the service are now in a position to operate open door policy again and a letter was sent to the parents as of the 13/8/25 informing them of this. This change supports stronger connections between home and setting and helps children feel secure and confident as they transition each day. Parents were sent a letter highlighting the service's settling in policy, partnership with parents' policy and drop off/collection policy.

The service will maintain a positive and friendly relationship with parents upon pick up and drop off and exchange as much information as possible. One staff member is specifically allocated in the baby room to complete daily logs. This will ensure the correct information is gathered in the log throughout the day.

The service will ensure that parents are informed daily upon pick up and logs are completed and forward each evening to parents.

Supporting documentation submitted

Non-compliance 1; Letter from the service to parents dated 29 August 2025 regarding change in food provision to include that food logs for all children attending the service.

Non-compliance 2; Letter from the service to staff members dated August 2025 outlining practices of mealtime routines and the importance of opportunities for self-feeding.

Non-compliance 3; Letter from the service to the parents dated 21 August 2025 outlining the service's drop off and collection procedure to include access points to the care rooms. Letter from the service dated August 2025 to staff regarding the open-door policy which was beginning 25 August 2025 and request to read the relevant service policies. Photograph of buzzer system in place for parents to access the baby and toddler room.

The service's updated settling in policy and healthy eating policy were submitted.

Summary Comment

Based on the implementation of the actions submitted by the registered provider, it is deemed that the regulatory requirement has been met. Regulation 19. Health, welfare and development of child will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

Compliance Information

Each of the four care rooms provided children with a rest area to retreat to during the day. The areas provided the varying age groups in each room with a different experience. For example, in the baby room the children were provided with low level soft seating with a soft floor mat. In the Butterfly room, the children aged 3 to 6 years were provided with a couch. The children were observed to sit and read on the couch, while later in the day children were observed to lie down and rest for short periods of time. The staff members explained the children's enjoyment of the couches as it was possibly a similarity to their home environment.

The children in the Baby room and the Toddler room were each provided with a separate sleep room adjacent to their classrooms. The staff members in the Baby room outlined that recent works took place in the service and that the size of baby sleep room was increased. There were six standard cots available in the baby sleep room.

Each child in the Toddler sleep room had their own sheet, blanket and a photograph of the child attached to their mat.

There were six stackable beds with appropriate bed linen and blankets also available for children aged over two years should they require to sleep or take a nap while attending the service.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The inspector observed that five children in the Toddler room who were under the age of two years did not have suitable floor beds provided for them as recommended by the Early Years Inspectorate sleep provision guidance document.

The depth of the sleep mats provided for the children in the Toddler sleep room were observed to be too thin and did not meet the requirement of being at least 6 cm in depth as recommended by the Early Years Inspectorate sleep provision guidance document.

2. There was no evidence available to demonstrate that parents had been consulted about the use of sleep mats for the five children aged 18 months to 2 years, who were sleeping on the floor mats.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service purchased suitable beds for children under the age of 2 to accommodate a safe sleep. The sleep mats which were previously used in the toddler room have been replaced with stackable beds. Going forward, monthly checks on all bedding will be carried out by management.
2. The service has asked parental permission for any child between 15 months to 2 years as per the guidance for the early learning and care sector on sleep provision for children under 2 years old. The service is now completing sleep plans for any child under two years who is not sleeping in a cot. The service has updated the parent's handbook regarding the service's safe sleep policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Receipt for new beds to accommodate under 2's dated 20 May 2025, Photograph of 5 stackable beds in the Toddler sleep room. Updated sleep policy, to include reference to a risk assessment and sleep plan for children under 15 months prior to the use of floor beds. Sleep plans for children under 2 years which were completed by the service and child's parent/guardian.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement for Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play has been met. The actions and supporting documentation submitted will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The children were provided with environments which were age appropriate and flexible to meet their needs in each of the care rooms. The staff members outlined that the service had engaged with a quality programme following the previous inspection. They explained how the environments had developed and evolved. Within each of the care rooms, the materials and equipment available for the children was age and stage appropriate for the needs of the children present. The equipment and materials were at a low level and accessible for the children. The materials available provided children with an opportunity for challenge, curiosity and exploration. Natural materials were available in the care rooms which provoked a sense of wonder for the children. For example, in the baby room the children had access open ended materials which included clear bottles filled with various liquids, textures and colours which challenged their sense of curiosity when they looked at them, shook them or watched them roll on the floor. The care rooms provided children with an inviting space to engage with varying materials and equipment.

For example, the following was in place in the baby room:

The materials were on low level shelving and were accessible for the children. There were varying colours and textures of soft matting which visually created different areas for the young children. For example, artificial grass and soft textured flooring. There were interest areas within the room which the children could explore including an area with soft toys, dress up items, book area and sensory wall activities. The equipment was age appropriate to support children’s development and movement for example, equipment was available to encourage children to pull-to-stand. The low-level shelving had materials and equipment which were visible and easily accessible. This included animals, wooden blocks and baskets with natural materials. As outlined within the service’s curriculum policy, through providing children with a diverse environment for playing and exploring, it supports their learning and development.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The staff in the Toddler room and Butterfly room explained to the inspector that a breakfast with options of wheat and rice-based cereals with milk is offered to all children arriving at the service in the mornings. All other snacks and meals are provided by parents from home. Each classroom has a refrigerator in which to store the children’s snacks and meals with daily food and fridge temperature logs maintained.

The children have a morning snack at 10:30 hours, their main meal at 12:30 hours and tea/ large snack between the hours of 15:30 and 15:45 hours.

The inspector observed that child centred allergy and nutrition plans developed in conjunction with the individual children’s parents were maintained and stored safely within easy reach of the staff. Children who were on prescribed diets such as a gluten free diet had all their food stored in a sealed lunch box.

When the inspector asked staff in the Baby room and Toddler room if a child disliked their food or was hungry in between meals, what other options were provided, staff informed the inspector that the classrooms had a “Dry food” box which typically stored crackers and rice cakes.

Staff members in the baby room described the food preferences for the children attending the room. It was outlined that children were at varying stages of textures which included pureed food and food with lumps. The children’s routine for bottles was discussed with staff members. The practices observed was reflective of the service healthy eating policy and the information provided on the individual routines displayed in the care room.

Non-Compliance Information

1. The practices during mealtimes were at variance of the service’s healthy eating policy as follows:
 - a. The service’s policy outlined that the food is provided by the service. It is noted that the registered provider outlined the service’s policies and procedures were being updated. The policy described that healthy meals are freshly cooked on the premises by a qualified and experienced cook. Separately, the policy outlined that meals were provided by a third-party company. However, the practices observed on the day and outlined by staff members were not reflective of the policy

provided to the inspectors. In discussion with staff members, it was outlined that parents provide the snacks and dinner for children.

- b. Alternative food was not available or offered to children in the Butterfly or Ladybird room. In discussion, staff members in the two care rooms outlined where a child forgot their lunchbox, that the service would contact the parent to request that food was brought to the service. Staff informed the inspector that the child would have to wait and did not consider the child's hunger, social participation, learning and enjoyment of having their meal with the other children in the class. Staff members outlined that additional food was not available within the service for the children attending the Butterfly room. In the case where a child did not enjoy their dinner, staff members explained the child would be offered food from their lunchbox. On the day of inspection, one child who did not eat their dinner was not observed to be offered food from their lunchbox or an alternative from the service. This was at variance with the service's healthy eating policy which outlined that there is enough food available based on the number of hours the children attends.
 - c. The service policy outlined that children attending for more than five hours have two meals, and one of which was a hot meal. Staff members explained that children attending on a full day care basis brought a dinner to the service, which was then re-heated by the staff members. The practices observed in the Butterfly room and Ladybird room were at variance with the service's policy as follows:
 - i. In the Ladybird room staff informed the inspector that if a child forgot their main hot meal, they would be provided with crackers or rice cakes, which each room had a store of, in their "dry food" storage box. This proposed solution did not provide the food requirements to meet the nutrition standard for a hot meal for a child attending a full day childcare service.
2. Children in the Baby and Butterfly room were not provided with water during mealtimes. In the Baby room, children were provided with a drink after their food. This was at variance with the service's healthy eating policy which stated that children are offered a drink of water or milk at mealtimes and snack times.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The following actions were submitted by the registered provider:
 - a. This policy has now been updated to reflect that food is being provided from an outside source. Parents have been made aware of this change and the new healthy eating policy has been highlighted to parents. This will be reviewed by management annually.
 - b. & c. In the event that a child does not eat the hot meals provided, the service have additional foods available on the premises which includes beans, spaghetti, bread stored in freezer for toast, portions of homemade soup, dried pasta which can be cooked and also ready-made dinners stored in our freezer should they prefer those. Staff have been made aware of new healthy eating policy.
2. Children in Butterfly and Ladybird rooms have access to their own water bottles at all times throughout the day. Children in Baby and Toddler room are provided with drinks after during mealtimes and additionally throughout the day. Management will conduct daily checks to ensure this is being adhered to.

Supporting documentation submitted

Non-compliance 1; Letter from the service to parents on 21 August 2025 outlining the food provision measures in place from 8 September 2025. Updated healthy eating policy.

Non-compliance 2; Letter from the service to staff dated August 2025 outlining that children must be provided with a drink with each meal and throughout the day.

Summary Comment

Based on the assurances provided by the registered provider through the actions submitted, it is deemed that the regulatory requirement has been met. The implementation of these actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

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 low-level windows within the care rooms were appropriately secured with a safety mechanism.
- The highchairs in the Baby room were in good condition with the appropriate safety harnesses in place.
- Large equipment including play kitchens were appropriately anchored and secured.
- Medication was stored out of reach of children and it was clearly labelled with the child's name.
- The manhole cover in the front garden was fenced off and the children could not access the area.

Infection Control:

- Staff members outlined that children who sleep in cots had their own individual bed linen. On the day of inspection, the linen was changed prior to a different child sleeping in the cot. This was reflective of the service's safe sleep and infection control policies.
- The service practices their own nappy changing procedure. From a sample of nappy changes observed, the staff were observed to wear an apron and gloves. Following the nappy change, the gloves and aprons were removed promptly and the nappy changing area was wiped down.
- Handwashing practices were reflective of the service's infection control policy. Handwashing was observed following children using the toilet, returning from outdoors, prior to mealtimes and as required.
- Children's bottles were refrigerated and clearly labelled with the child's name. Staff members outlined that bottles are made by the parents and warmed using a bottle warmer. This practice was observed on the day and it was reflective of the service's infection control policy.
- The nappy changing areas appeared clean and were uncluttered. As outlined within the service's infection control policy, toys and materials were observed to be not stored or brought into the nappy changing areas.

Safe Sleep:

- The children in the Baby room were provided with a cellular blanket for sleep.
- In the baby room, staff members were in the care room while children slept in the adjoining sleep room. They carried out 10-minute sleep checks while children slept. The records which included the colour, position and breathing of each child was recorded following each sleep check which was carried out.
- A thermometer was present in each of the two sleep rooms and temperatures were maintained between 18-22°C while children slept.

Fire Safety:

- A fire drill occurred on the morning of inspection and that staff members were familiar with the fire evacuation procedures as per the service's updated fire safety displays.

Non-Compliance Information

Fire Safety:

1. A staff roster was available within the service; however, it was not reflective of the adults who were present within the service on the day of inspection, or the hours worked. For example,
 - a. The registered provider was not included on the roster,
 - b. One staff member who was present was not rostered to work,
 - c. One staff member was present within the service later than the hours rostered to work.
2. On review of the staff sign in records, staff members did not sign into the service. This was at variance with the service's fire safety policy which outlined that staff sign into the service on arrival. In discussion with the registered provider, it was outlined that this posed a risk in the event of an emergency evacuation as the actual adults present within the service were not documented.
3. A referral was made to the Chief fire safety officer. The fire evacuation signage in place was at variance with the routes which were taken by the staff members. Fire signage was not evident on exit routes used by the staff members within the Baby room, Toddler room and Ladybird room.

Infection Control:

4. Four of the five cot mattresses were torn. This was found non-compliant during an inspection on 21 October 2024. the actions as stated by the registered provider through the CAPA process were not implemented to reduce the likelihood of the reoccurrence. It is noted that the registered provider

provided supporting documentation on the day which demonstrated cot mattresses have been purchased by the service.

5. The ten sleep mats provided in the Toddler room sleep room were not adequately spaced at 50 centimetres apart to reduce the risk of potential cross infection.
6. The inspector observed that soothers had been placed on top of each child's sleep mat in the Toddler sleep room from the inspector's arrival and were not appropriately stored in a sterile airtight container.
7. The nappy changing bin in the Toddler nappy changing room was handle operated and not foot pedal operated as per the Early Years Inspectorate regulatory notice, September 2022.
8. The inspector observed that children in the Toddler room were eating food items such as raisins, breadsticks, banana pieces and slices of cheese directly off the classroom tables which posed a potential risk of food contamination. At one stage the child's slice of cheese was stuck to the table and the child was observed having to try and peel it off.
9. One child was observed drinking out of a drink container which was labelled with a different child's name.

General Safety:

10. In the Ladybird and Butterfly room, children's dinners were served to them in the containers that had been used in the microwave to reheat the meals. These containers were made from plastic or glass. On review of the reheating of food records in the Ladybird classroom, the inspector observed that on several occasions food was reheated to temperatures ranging from 75.2°C to 99.2°C. This posed a risk of burn injuries to a child.
11. At 12.30pm, a child in the Butterfly room had whole grapes in their lunchbox at dinner time. The child was sitting at the table eating their food and the inspector requested the staff member to cut the grapes to an appropriate size. On the inspector's return to the care room at 3.55pm, the same child was sitting at the table with whole grapes in their lunchbox for snack time. Both inspector's requested actions to be taken by the staff members again.
12. The five children aged 0 to 2 years in the Baby room were not appropriately secured into the highchairs while eating their morning snack or at dinnertime. It is noted that the staff member remained within reasonable distance. However, equipment should be used as per the manufacturer's guidelines.
13. A gap in the soft play surface in the Toddler play area posed a risk of a child or adult tripping and injuring themselves.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Fire Safety:

1. All staff are now included on roster including Managers and administration staff. The staff member present within the later than hours rostered was to be allocated to non-contact time.
2. Staff now complete a sign in and sign out register each day which is checked daily by the duty manager.
3. The service engaged with the fire officer, who has been onsite and all fire evacuation signage is now in place. Going forward, a weekly fire safety check will be conducted and carried out in the service.

Infection Control:

4. New cot mattresses were bought. A weekly checklist will be done on all cot, beddings and mattresses.
5. To ensure that the stackable beds are kept at 50cm apart whilst the children are sleeping, the service have made markers on the floor to ensure that correct distance is kept between each bed at all times. Staff in the Baby and Toddler room have reviewed and familiarised themselves with the service's safe sleep policy.
6. All soothers are now stored in airtight containers.
7. Foot pedal operation bins now in place. Management will review and keep updated with the Tulsa guidelines.
8. Going forward, plates will be provided for each child during snack-time. Staff have been given a letter to read the new updated healthy eating policy.
9. Children each have their own individually labelled drink container. Staff had been issued with a letter highlighting ensuring children drink from their own cups only at all times.

General Safety:

10. This will no longer be an issue, as food is outsourced.
11. Where a child who attends the centre has uncut grapes or fruit, they will be cut by a member of staff. The service sent parents a message with regards to the cutting of fruit. And a letter will be emailed to all parents with regards to safe eating again to ensure fruit is properly cut up. The staff were asked to read healthy eating policy.
12. All equipment is used as per manufacturers guidelines. Staff in baby room were issued with a letter regarding proper use of all equipment.
13. The works were completed to the playground. Daily risk assessments will be carried out on outdoor area to ensure the ground is kept up to standard.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire Safety:

Photograph of fire evacuation displays, signage in the outdoor area and fire assembly point.

A template of a monthly checklist for sign in /out and a monthly management checklist for fire safety.

Infection Control:

Photograph of stackable beds with soothers in individual containers. Photograph of stackable beds. Photograph of the Toddler sleep room. Photograph of the new cot mattresses. Template of a daily checklist for the sleep room to include the checking of cot mattresses.

General Safety:

Letter to parents requesting grapes to be cut. Risk assessment for the outdoor area. Communication with staff dated August 2025 outlining that highchairs are used appropriately. Photographs of the repairs carried out to the outdoor area [12 September 2025]

Summary Comment

Based on the implementation of the actions and supporting documentation submitted by the registered provider, the regulatory requirement has been met for Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.

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 trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced through discussion with the staff and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2)

- (a)(b) The first aid boxes provided in each of the classrooms were easily located in clearly visible safe locations. There was recorded evidence that the contents of the first aid boxes were checked monthly and that the first aid provisions were always available for the children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (e) The inspectors observed that there were 3 toilets and 3 handwash basins provided in a shared toilet facility, for the total of 40 preschool children in attendance in the Ladybird and Butterfly classrooms on the day of inspection. The recommended number of toilets and handwash basins recommended for management of infectious disease in childcare facilities and childcare settings is 1 toilet and 1 handwash basin per 11 children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (e) The service have been looking at feasible options to allocate additional toileting facilities to the Montessori. This is a big under taking and will take time to accommodate. The registered provider contacted the plumber and they have given us a timeframe of 2 to 3 months before the works can begin.

Supporting documentation submitted

No documentation was submitted.

Summary Comment

While it is noted that actions and a timeframe were submitted by the registered provider, Regulation 29 Premises (e) remains outstanding. This regulation will be assessed on the next inspection.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(2)

The service's complaint policy did not provide the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service. The registered provider confirmed that person named on the service's complaint policy is no longer in position. The policy did not provide details on how a complaint is formally made. The procedures for keeping a person who makes a complaint to the service informed as to how it was being dealt with was not outlined.

Documented records to demonstrate how the service managed complaints were not available or open for inspection.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The complaints policy is now updated. The policy will be reviewed by management annually to ensure policy is kept up to date.

Supporting documentation submitted

Updated complaints policy with named persons and the process to follow.

Summary Comment

The requirement has been met for Regulation 32 Complaints.