

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2016DY035

Name of Service: Safari Childcare (Rathmines)

Address of Service: The Park Building, William Park, Rathmines, Dublin 6.

Eircode: D06 V0V2

Name of Registered Provider: Cian Powell, Kevin McGuinness

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 29/01/2026

No of pre-school children:	AM	86	PM	52
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Early Years Inspectorate,
Floor 7 Brunel Building,
Heuston South Quarter,
St John's Road West,
Kilmainham,
Dublin 8 | D08 X01F

Inspection undertaken by: E. Griffin and T. Nelson

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

Description of service

Safari Childcare Rathmines is a privately operated full day childcare service located in a residential area in South Dublin. The service is one of nine services operated by the two registered providers. The service caters for up to 100 children aged 1-6 years and operates Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates three morning sessions: ECCE 1 from 8:45am to 11:45am and ECCE 2 and ECCE 3 from 9:00am to 12:00pm. The service also operates a registered school aged childcare service which operates from the three ECCE care rooms during the afternoon.

The service is based in a three-storey purpose-built building and is comprised of eight care rooms. On the ground floor there is a reception area with an office, a kitchen, a cot room and two care rooms: Wobbler room 1 catering for children aged 1- 1 ½ years and Wobbler room 2 catering for children aged 1 ½ to 2 years. On the first floor there is an outdoor play area located on an enclosed balcony and three care rooms: Toddler room catering for children aged 2-3 years, Preschool 1 room catering for children aged 3-4 years and ECCE 1 room catering for children aged 3-4 years. On the second floor there are three care rooms ECCE 2 room catering for children aged 3-5 years, ECCE 3 room catering for children aged 3-5 years and Preschool 2 catering for children aged 3-5 years. The service has sanitary accommodation available on each floor.

Staffing

The registered providers employ twenty-three adults to work in the service. Adults employed include a person in charge, a deputy person in charge, and twenty adults who work directly with the children and one auxiliary staff for cooking.

On the day of inspection there were twenty-one adults rostered and present on the premises, eighteen working directly with the children, two persons in charge who were available for support if required, and a cook. One student was also present on the day of inspection, working in a supernumerary capacity. The registered providers do not work in the service or directly with children. During the afternoon one of the registered providers arrived and remained on site to help assist the inspection process and attended the feedback meeting with the two designated persons in charge.

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 and premises. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

- Regulation 9 (1)(2)(3)(4) – Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 19 (1)(b)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 29 Premises

As a result, the scope of the inspection included all care rooms and the outdoor play area.

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

29 January 2026

An immediate action notice was issued to the registered providers in relation to two significant concerns identified under Regulation 23, Safeguarding the Health, Welfare and Development of Child. A response which adequately mitigated these concerns were received on the 30 January 2026. Further details are available under general safety section in Regulation 23.

A regulatory compliance meeting was held on 11 February 2026.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, deputy person in charge, staff, student 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 and named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge showed that five new adults had been employed to work directly with the children since the last inspection on 13 February 2025. On the day the files

of the student and five new adults were reviewed. In addition, garda vetting disclosures for six adults whose files had been reviewed on the last inspection were also reviewed.

- (a) There were nine written and validated references available from past employers.
 - (b) There were three written and validated references available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained all twelve adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in relation to six adults who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that five adults who worked directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification that is deemed of equivalence by the minister.

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 working directly with the children attending the service. On the morning of the inspection there were eighteen adults working directly with 86 children aged from 1 to 5 years. During the afternoon of the inspection there were 11 adults working directly with 52 children aged from 1-5 years of age. In addition, the person in charge and deputy person in charge were available to provide support to the care rooms when required during the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The registered providers did not ensure that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained. An insufficient number of adults were available to the children in the Preschool 2 room during the afternoon of the inspection.

Service Type:	Age Range:	Number of children present:	Number of adults providing direct care:	Minimum number of adults required:
Full Day Care	3-5 Years	17 Children	2 adults	3 adults

It is acknowledged that there was an extra staff member available on the first floor. However, from 2pm to 3pm this care room was out of ratio. The correct adult child ratio for this age group is one adult caring for 8 children attending on a full-time basis.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

This was a managerial oversight that there was one child over ratio on the day of inspection. The service had extra staff on the middle floor so going forward management will check and make sure a third member of staff is available. Management have spoken to the float members of staff and made them aware that they may be needed in different rooms and to check every day.

Supporting documentation submitted

No supporting documentation submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 11 has been addressed.

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 registered provider ensured the following appropriate and suitable care practices were in place to facilitate the children's learning, development and wellbeing:

- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- Children were provided with regular meals including a hot meal and snacks which were prepared by an on-site chef. On the morning of the inspection children in the care rooms were observed being served a snack of freshly cut fruit, bananas, apples, oranges, blueberries and raisins. A hot lunch was served later on in the day and consisted of rice and vegetables; there was an alternative dish of couscous was available if required and extra portions were offered. During the afternoon children were observed be offered crackers and cheese. Drinking water was available.
- The care rooms in the service were designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration and equipment and materials were visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity.
- The presence of a 'Family Wall' display, a 'Birthday Time' display, individually labelled coat hooks with the child's name and photograph and the children's artwork which was displayed throughout the care rooms and hallways demonstrated a sense of identity for the children and promoted links between the home and the service.
- Cosy areas of soft floor mats or rugs with soft chairs cushions and books for rest and relaxation were present.
- There was evidence to show that the staff planned children's activities based on the children's interests. For example, in Wobbler 2 room, the weekly and monthly curriculum plans were displayed on the wall in the care room. These plans encompassed the children's emergent interests.
- Children's language development was supported through conversations, activity times, singing songs and storytelling activities which were observed during the inspection.

- Children’s autonomy and independence was promoted, and children appeared to be familiar with the transition from mealtimes to sleep time. For example, children in the Wobbler 2 room were observed to be familiar with cleaning up after mealtimes and getting ready for sleep time.

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 inspection team were asked to show identification and sign in the visitor book on arrival.
- There was an up-to-date staff roster available and staff were observed to sign in and out of the service.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of reach of children.
- Doors within the service were observed to have finger protectors.
- The kitchen area was observed to be inaccessible to the children.
- There were no trailing flexes or cables observed to be accessible to the children.
- Televisions were mounted securely in rooms where they were present and heavy furniture was securely mounted.
- The stairway was observed to be clear and well-lit with a suitable handrail in place.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand drying facilities. Children were observed to be familiar with washing their hands before snack time, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- Soothers were stored in individually labelled boxes.
- Children had individually labelled sleeping beds and cots with own linen. Staff were familiar with the washing schedule for example staff discussed how bed linen was laundered once a week or in between if required.

- The premises was observed to be clean and hygienic and there were completed and up to date cleaning schedules on the wall of the care rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Safe Sleep:

- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained in rooms where children over one years of age slept.
- Heavy outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Children were monitored while sleeping at intervals of ten minutes or less and staff recorded the breathing, position, and colour of each child at each child.

Fire Safety:

- The fire evacuation exits were observed to be unobstructed throughout the inspection. The children's attendance book was monitored to ensure staff knew how many children were present. This ensured a safe evacuation of the children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. There was damage to the glass window of the outdoor play area which posed a potential significant risk of injury evidenced by the following.
 - There was only one panel of glass remaining in the double-glazing window unit. The remaining glass panel appeared to be compromised due to large cracks across the window making it appear unsafe.
 - When the inspector moved the equipment which had been positioned in front of this window unit there was shattered glass pieces on the floor surrounding this area. In addition, the remains of jagged glass were observed to be prodding out of the surrounding area where the inside pane of glass had existed before it was removed. It is acknowledged attempts had been made to make this area safe by covering the jagged glass edges with industrial tape and equipment placed in front of the area. However, parts of this area were observed to be exposed as the industrial tape had come undone on the lower part of the unit.

An immediate action notice was issued on the day of the inspection. A response was received by the person in charge on 30 January 2026 which mitigated these risks.
2. Several glass windowpanes of the service were observed to have large cracks. One which was observed to be shattered completely from the outside. Through discussion with staff and photographic evidence from the previous inspection showed that damage to the windows appeared to have worsened since the last inspection

on 13 February 2025. This posed a potential risk to the children. It is acknowledged that the registered provider has engaged in talks with the building owners regarding a resolution for the windows in the service.

3. The surface temperature of the radiator at the entrance hall of the service was measured at 53.7°C at 10:32am. The surface temperature of the radiator which was positioned at the bottom of the stairs on the ground floor was measured at 50.9°C at 10:35am. The surface temperature of a radiator on the first floor was measured at 51.6°C at 10:38am. All radiators were at a height accessible to children. This posed a potential scalding risk. It is acknowledged that the person in charge and one of the registered providers took immediate action to reduce the radiator temperatures once the identified risk was brought to their attention. A similar non-compliance was observed on the previous inspection on 13 February 2025, and the preventive action had not been sustained. An immediate action notice was issued on the day of the inspection. A response was received by the person in charge on 30 January 2026 which mitigated these risks.
4. The window in the cot room on the ground floor of the service did not have safety restrictors. This window was accessible from a public pathway which posed a potential risk of safety for the children. It is acknowledged this window was closed and secured during the times children were sleeping. However, this window had been observed to be open during the morning while this room was without children and unsupervised.
5. Six of the twelve garda vetting disclosures reviewed was not dated within the three years in adherence with early years inspectorate regulatory notice requiring services to renew staff garda vetting every 3 years. It is acknowledged that this garda vetting was applied for before the inspection date. However, the six garda vetting disclosures had not been received prior to their expiry date. This posed a safeguarding risk.

Infection Control:

6. The sanitary accommodation on the first floor did not have a foot pedalled operated bin available for the appropriate disposal of waste. This posed a risk of cross infection.
7. Two of the children's nappy lotions were not labelled. This posed a risk of cross infection.

Safe Sleep:

Sleep practices were not in line with current safe sleep guidance or the service policy on safe sleep. The following practices were observed:

8. In the Wobbler 1 cot sleep room, one sleeping child was observed to have a bottle and toy in the cot. The inspector also observed two more cots with sleeping children to have toys present.
9. In the Wobbler 2 sleep area, six children under 2 years old were observed to sleep on stackable low beds. These are not suitable sleep equipment for children under the age of two years. In addition, there were no

agreed sleep plans available with parental permission and there was no risk assessment in place for those children under the age of two years who did not sleep in a cot. A sleep plan, incorporating a risk assessment and parental consent, should be completed before moving a child from a cot to a floor bed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The large, double-glazed window beside the playground entrance, in which one pane was shattered, has now been replaced with a new double-glazed panel. This new glass panel is toughened on both sides. This should prevent it from shattering in the future should the glass ever become compromised.
2. The registered providers are in discussions with the building owners to have these windowpanes replaced with appropriate glass. The building owners have sent out representatives to inspect the windows, and the registered providers have received an email from them since agreeing to replace some windows. The registered providers will continue to engage with the building owners until all the affected glass is replaced.
3. This was actioned immediately. The registered provider lowered the temperature to the correct one. The service now has a radiator thermometer, and management will check the radiator temperatures daily.
4. Management organised for the handyman to come and fit safety restrictors to the windows in the sleep room. Management will make sure the windows are well maintained at all times.
5. Management was not aware the vetting process was taking much longer and in fact they arrived a couple of days after the inspection. In future we will apply for the vetting's well in advance. We have set up a notification on the computer to remind management when everyone's garda vetting needs to be redone. Management have also added it to the diary.

Infection Control:

6. A new foot pedal bin has been added to the first-floor sanitary area. Management will check the bins in all sanitary areas regularly.
7. The creams were disposed of and the owners identified and new creams were bought and labelled. Staff were made aware at a staff meeting the risk of cross infection and the importance of labelling everything.

Safe Sleep:

8. At a staff meeting staff were made aware that no bottles are to be given to children in the cots even if a staff member is present. In addition, staff were made aware if a baby uses a comfort toy it needs to be removed when the child falls asleep. Management have placed signs in the sleep room reminding staff of this.

9. New suitable beds for under two's have been ordered for the children. Management have developed a sleep plan with parental permission incorporating a risk assessment that needs to be completed for every child under 2. Staff were made aware that this sleep plan needs to be done for every child moving from a cot to a bed.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence of the double-glazed window beside the playground entrance replaced.
2. Documentary evidence of correspondence with building owners.
3. No supporting documentation included.
4. Photographic evidence of the window restrictors secured on the identified windows.
5. Documentary evidence of Garda Vetting disclosures for six adults.

Infection Control:

6. No supporting documentation included.
7. No supporting documentation included.

Safe Sleep:

8. No supporting documentation included.
9. Documentary evidence of sleep plans and risk assessments.

Summary Comment

The inspectorate has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed. However, the non-compliance for Regulation 23(2) will remain outstanding until the work proposed has been completed.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

Compliance Information

- (b)
- Access to the care rooms on each floor is gained via a keypad system. This prevents children from leaving each area unsupervised whilst also prevent unauthorised persons accessing these areas.
 - Non-slip floor coverings were in place throughout the service. Flooring around high-risk areas such as stairs were secured.
 - Emergency exits were clearly identified.
- (c)
- The sanitary areas within the service were fitted with mechanical ventilation systems, this was effective in removing odours.
 - An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained throughout the care rooms, and the windows were open to allow fresh circulation of air.
 - Natural light was introduced into the service via large windows with artificial light supplementing this if needed.
- (d)
- Cleaning schedules were available in care rooms and sanitary areas and were observed to be completed to date.
 - Flooring within the service was maintained and clean.
 - There was a newly fitted soft artificial ground surface in the outdoor play area.
- (e)
- An adequate number of sanitary facilities were available for use by the children. The following was observed.
 - Eight toilets and eight sinks were available for use by toilet trained children.
 - Three nappy changing units and sinks were available for children who required nappy changing.

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