

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2021DL007SA
Name of School Age Service:	Wonderyears Ecce Ltd
Name of Registered Provider(s):	Marcella McNamee
Address of School Age Service:	Rossbracken Letterkenny Co. Donegal
Eircode:	F92 TX99

Date(s) of Inspection:	31 March 2025
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 29
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Early Years Inspectorate 180-189 Lakeshore Drive Airside Business Park Swords Co Dublin
Inspection undertaken by:	M. McDonnell A. Spain
Title:	Early years inspectors

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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:

Wonderyears Ecce Ltd is a registered school-age service located in a rural area of Co Donegal. The service provides care to children aged 4 to 15 years old. A breakfast club is provided from 7.00 to 9.00am and an afterschool club from 1.30 to 5.30pm during term time. The school age children have access to four main care rooms alongside other rooms, such as a dining room and sanitary facilities, within the service. There is a large outdoor area on the premises for children to access. There is a registered preschool service on the site.

Staffing:

The service is staffed by eight adults which includes the person in charge who is available to the service in a management capacity. The registered provider also works in the service. A horticulturist is also employed outdoors in the service.

Additional Information:

This inspection was triggered following information received by the Inspectorate.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- a) caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,

- b) provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- c) the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, person in charge, members of management and staff who were present on the day of inspection.

Summary of Findings:

On the day of inspection, the registered provider was found to be compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures;
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies etc. of school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13(1)(a)(b)(c)(2)(a)(b)(3)(a)(b): Complaints;
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.*
- (2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

The staff files for the registered provider and nine staff members' files were reviewed. Two validated references from past employers were held on file in respect of four staff members working in the service. Two validated references from reputable sources were also held on file in respect of four staff members. A validated reference from a past employer and a validated reference from a reputable source was held on file in respect of the remaining two staff members. A Garda vetting was held on file in respect of 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. International police vetting was held on file in respect of one staff member who had lived outside of the state for over six consecutive months as an adult.

Records confirmed that the necessary vetting procedures as specified in paragraph 1 were conducted prior to the appointment of staff to work in the service.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (3) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service singlehandedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance in operating the service to the person in charge is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge or the registered provider of the childminding service in the event of an emergency.*
- (4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspectors observed that there were four staff members working directly with 29 children. Throughout the inspection, these staff members working directly with the children were supported by supernumerary staff, for example with lunches. During the inspection, the children were observed to be supervised appropriately both indoors and outdoors. For example, in one room a staff member was with children who were still eating and finishing homework, whilst another staff member was with the larger group outdoors. A sample of records reviewed for the week of 3 March 2025 demonstrated that there was sufficient staff supervising the children with support staff available.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspectors reviewed the managing behaviour policy which was reviewed in January 2025 and the complaints policy which was reviewed in June 2024. Both contained information from schedule 6 to support staff in safe practices working with the children.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service had insurance cover for a maximum of 230 children in daily attendance in a full day care service. Insurance cover was valid from the 28 March 2025 to the 27 March 2026.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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 of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that—
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the school age service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall—
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The complaints policy detailed the procedure for making a complaint and how verbal and written complaints would be dealt with. The policy referenced how a complainant would be kept informed of the complaints procedure.

The staff members informed the inspectors that there were no complaints for the service.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

During the inspection, the inspectors observed the health, safety and welfare of children being supported by the following:

- The management of the service had notified the Inspectorate of a recent incident. There was documentation in place to demonstrate that service policies had been followed and risk assessments had been implemented. The management staff spoken with and staff working directly with the children were able to give a detailed account of the incident, which was reflective of the records taken and written at the time of the incident. The documentation reviewed demonstrated that the incident had been escalated and discussed by internal management structures and a plan had been put in place to minimise risk and update policies. Records also demonstrated that external support had been sought for the management of the incident and the updating of the service's policies.
- The management staff spoken with advised the inspector of the measures taken by the service to revise policies, notify staff and implement any agreed changes after the occurrence of incidents. Staff spoken with confirmed a system in place in which they were advised of changes and updates within the service, where they could provide feedback and request assistance during the meetings that are in place. Staff described the value of these consistent meetings in supporting their work with the children. There was documented evidence of a management meeting to review the incident and update relevant policies.
- The inspectors observed that staff members were aware of the behaviour management strategies within the service and there were training records available. Staff were observed interacting kindly with the children and discussing the children's days with them. In one room it was observed that a staff member was helping children with their

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homework, whilst another staff member was engaging and supporting children in activities who either had no homework or had finished it.

- There was documented communication with parents about incidents within the service. This included the most recent incident and a review of records from September 2024 to March 2025 demonstrated that parents had been informed of incidents with signed parental records available.