

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023KE007
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Name of Service:	Elsmore Creche
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Address of Service:	Elsmore, Naas, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	W91 E8XP
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Name of Registered Providers:	Claire Doyle, Tracey Smullen
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/03/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	100	PM	78
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Rd, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Brien & F. Carty
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	N/A
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Description of service

Elsmore Creche is one of three privately owned services operated by the registered providers. The service provides full day, part time and sessional care for children aged 0 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate from 07:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a purpose-built single storey premises located in a residential housing development in Naas, Co Kildare. There are eight care rooms in the service. Room 1 caters for children aged 3 years. Room 2 caters for children aged 3 to 4 years. Room 3 caters for children aged 3 to 5 years. Room 4 and Room 5 cater for children aged 1 year. Room 6 caters for children aged 2 to 3 years. Room 7 caters for children age 3 to 5 years and Room 8 caters for children aged 2 years.

The service has two separate cot rooms. There is a fully enclosed outdoor play area to the rear and side of the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs 30 staff. There were 19 adults working directly with the children on the day of inspection who were supported by the manager and deputy manager. The service also employs two chefs, two staff members who carry out administrative duties and two cleaners.

The registered providers do not work directly in the service and were not present on the day of inspection.

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

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This inspection was unannounced and focused on the area of governance/ health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(3),(4) – Management and recruitment,

11 (1),(2),(8)(a) – Staffing levels,

19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,

23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child,

25 – First aid,

26 – Fire safety measures.

However, on inspection additional non-compliance was identified under regulation 20 (1)(b) – Facilities for rest and play.

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations:

19 (1)(b) – Health, welfare and development of child,

23 – Safeguarding, health, safety and welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included Room 4, Room 5 and Room 8 and the outdoor 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.

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Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that-

- (a) the service has a designated person in charge and a named person who is able to deputise as required,*
- (b) at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on, the designated person in charge or the named person referred to in subparagraph (a) is on the premises, and*

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.*

(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)(b)

The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were on the premises throughout the inspection.

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(2)

The inspection focused on the recruitment records for seven adults employed since the last inspection on 15 October 2025. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and for one student who was present and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a)(b)

Of the 16 validated, written references that were required, 9 were available from a past employer and 7 were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the eight adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was required and was available for seven staff members who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that the six staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(b)

A review of documentation and discussion with the person in charge evidenced that one written reference from a past employer in respect of one adult had not been validated by the registered providers prior to the adult commencing in their role.

(3)

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing in their role in the service, as detailed above under regulation 9(2).

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Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(b)

The staff member in question was on a work experience placement, and the second reference has been completed and validated. The file checklist will be reviewed and signed off by HR before an employee or work experience starts their role.

(3)

The staff member in question was on a work experience placement, and the second reference has been completed and validated. The file checklist will be reviewed and signed off by HR before an employee or work experience starts their role.

Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered providers.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered providers have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1)

An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 100 children attending the service being supervised by 21 adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times.

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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Meals were provided at regular intervals and drinking water was available to children throughout the day. Dinner was served from 12:00. All children were given bibs for dinnertime. Staff sat with children during their dinner and children were encouraged to feed themselves. All children were given water with their meal. Staff supported children who needed assistance with their meals. Additional servings were available in the care rooms and staff were observed providing additional portions to children who requested more.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Staff were observed cleaning children's noses as required and children's hands and faces were cleaned after dinner. Children's wet clothing was changed promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly, and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care.

An area was provided within the rooms where the children could rest or take a break from activities. Children were placed to sleep when they displayed signs of tiredness. All children were made comfortable for sleep; staff removed children's shoes and outer clothing; they provided the children with blankets, and they offered soothers to those who used them.

Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children. Children were comforted promptly when they became upset. Staff were observed holding children and speaking to them softly. Staff were observed to use distraction, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour policy.

The staff described how they communicate with parents daily about their child at arrival and collection times and through an online application detailing information on food, sleep and nappy changes. Parents were observed in the service during drop off and collection times.

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A fully enclosed outdoor play area was located to the rear and side of the premises and had shock absorbent surfacing. A range of developmentally appropriate play equipment was provided in the outdoor play area. Children attending Rooms 5 and 8 were provided with the opportunity to play outdoors during the inspection and were dressed appropriately to the weather. Staff were observed engaging with children in the outdoor area and supporting them in their play.

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-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Appropriate rest facilities were not provided for all children under 2 years in Room 5. On the day of inspection, two children aged 1 year were observed on stackable beds.

These beds were not fitted with firm, flat, waterproof and breathable mattresses. This may impact the safety and quality of sleep for children under 2 years.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)

We have the beds available in our service fitted with the firm flat mattress, which were tested with both children but subsequently declined. The two children, aged 1 year and 8 months, have been offered the option to sleep on the beds fitted with firm, waterproof mattresses. All children under 2 years will be placed to sleep on beds fitted with firm, waterproof mattresses.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered providers.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered providers have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

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Part VI - Safety

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

A registered provider shall ensure that all reasonable measures are taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of a pre-school child attending the service and that the environment of the service is safe.

Compliance Information

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after nappy changing and before meals.
- Children's nappies were changed in line with the service's nappy changing policy to reduce the risk of the spread of infection.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers and mouthed toys.
- Individual bed linen was provided for children. Staff stated that bed linen is laundered weekly or as required.
- All cot mattresses in use had waterproof covers.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had an administration of medication policy in place. There were documented care plans available for children attending the service who required emergency medication. Staff working in the rooms with the children were aware of the treatment plans and demonstrated knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.
- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the service policy on medication administration.

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Safe Sleep:

- An adult remained in the room at all times where children were sleeping on low beds.

Fire Safety:

- All fire exits were clear of obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

Administration of Medication:

1. Practices in place for children attending the service requiring medication were at variance with the service policy, posing a potential risk to the health and safety of children. Emergency medication available for one child was out of date posing a risk to the effective treatment of the child in an emergency.

Safe Sleep:

2. Procedures and practices in place in relation to safe sleep for children using the cot room adjacent to Room 4 were inadequate and contrary to the service's policy on safe sleep posing a potential risk to the health and safety of children as follows.
 - a. Between 11:17 and 12:31 sleep checks were not consistently carried out every 10 minutes for a child aged 1 year who was sleeping in the cot room. Sleep checks were carried out at intervals of 15 minutes, 9 minutes, 14 minutes, 23 minutes, and 13 minutes.
Between 11:55 and 12:31 sleep checks were not carried out every 10 minutes for a second child aged 1 year who was sleeping in the cot room. Sleep checks were carried out at intervals of 23 minutes, and 13 minutes.
Staff in the room recorded sleep checks as taking place every 10 minutes during these times.
 - b. At 11:55, a child aged 1 year, who was sleeping in the cot room was not sufficiently checked. A staff member was observed checking the child from the doorway of the cot room where an adequate assessment could not be completed.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Administration of Medication:

1. The emergency medication has been replaced, and the service has now received the new medication for the child. This ensures that appropriate emergency medication is available and in date. To prevent delays in replacement, parents will now be reminded approximately 5 months in advance of expiry dates to allow sufficient time for renewal and supply of replacement medication. A new medication checklist has been

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created and displayed in the room including expiry dates and availability, and parents will now be reminded approximately 5 months in advance of expiry dates to allow sufficient time for renewal and supply of replacement medication.

Safe Sleep:

- The staff have been reminded that sleep checks must be conducted every 10 minutes and recorded accordingly. As a preventive measure, a timer will be set on the tablet to assist in ensuring sleep checks are conducted every 10 minutes.

Supporting documentation submitted

Administration of Medication:

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered providers.

Safe Sleep:

Written evidence was submitted to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered providers.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered providers have been deemed to address these non-compliances.

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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 was immediately available to the children at all times on the day of inspection.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-

(a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and

(b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

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

Compliance Information

(1)

(a)

A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on 04 February 2026.

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(b)

The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises was available. There was a record to show that the fire fighting equipment had been serviced on 16 February 2026 and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 10 February 2026.

(4)

The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations within the service.