

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023OY001				
Name of Service:	Memory Lane Pre-school				
Address of Service:	12 The Sycamores, Edenderry, Co. Offaly				
Eircode:	R45 A525				
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Pierce				
Service type:	Full Day, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	04/12/2025				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>31</td> <td>PM</td> <td>8</td> </tr> </table>	AM	31	PM	8
AM	31	PM	8		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, SAP Office, St Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co Westmeath, N91 N4XC.				
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Duignan				
Title:	Early Years Inspector				

Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(J) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable.
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Description of service

Memory Lane Pre-School is a full day care service, which also operates as it as a part time and sessional service. The service is located in a housing estate in the town of Edenderry in rural Co. Offaly. The service caters for children in the age range from 2 year to 6 years and operates from 7.30 am to 18:00 hours from Monday to Friday. The premises was originally purpose built and designed for sole use as an early years' service. Part of this premises is now used as a domestic dwelling. The remainder is used for the purpose of carrying on an early years' service.

The part of the premises used as an early years' service has an entrance hall, two care rooms, the larger room known as Room 1 is also used as a sleeping facility and the office. There are three toilets and a nappy changing facility.

Parking and set down for parents are available on the public road.

Staffing

The service employs eight adults including the registered provider.

Six staff members were present on the day of the inspection. The registered provider was not present. Of the six adults present, five adults were working directly with the children attending the service and the administrator for the service was present.

All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels, 5 to 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under.

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1), (2), (8)(a) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child.
- Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance.
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety.
- Regulation 27 – Supervision.
- Regulation 28 – Insurance.

however, on inspection additional non-compliances were identified under:

- Regulation 22 – Food and drink.
- Regulation 29(d) – Premises.

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.

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

(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.

(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

- (2)
- (a)(b) Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source other than a past employer, were available in respect of all adults employed whose staff files were reviewed.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months whose records were reviewed.
- (4) Seven adults employed to work directly with children attending the service and held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher or a recognised equivalent qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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) There were thirty-one children attending the service and they were supervised directly by five adults.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the Inspection. This was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the service.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that the food provided for each child attending the service was in all cases adequate, suitable and nutritious to meet their nutritional requirements while in the care of the early years' service. The registered provider did not ensure that all children attending on a full day care basis were provided with a hot meal, and milk was not offered as a drink with snacks and lunch.

Examples of food provided for the children at snack time was observed to include:

- One child had a chocolate rice bar for snack.
- One child had chocolate cake for their snack.
- Biscuits were observed to be eaten by other children as part of their snack.

This is at variance with the health eating policy which states that the service “does not allow chocolate.”

Examples of the foods provided for the main meal for individual children was observed to include:

- One child had a sandwich, a cracker, carrot pieces and water.
- One child had an apple, a yogurt drink and a cracker.
- One child had a snack packet of crackers, a box of raisins and water to drink.
- One child was observed eating 6 carrot puff crisps and 1 rice cake.
- One child had a chocolate doughnut for lunch.
- One child had a microwavable dinner which the packet stated was suitable for a toddler age 12+ months.

This was at variance with healthy eating policy for the service which states that “meals and snacks should be.... healthy for children.”

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following inspection, immediate action was taken to address the issue identified under Regulation 22 regarding the nutritional quality of children’s lunches. A message was issued to all parents/guardians via the service WhatsApp group clearly outlining the requirement to provide healthy, balanced lunches in line with our Healthy Eating Policy. Parents were informed that unhealthy food items will no longer be permitted during the service day and that any such items will be removed from lunchboxes and returned home at the end of the day. Staff have been briefed on this procedure and are actively monitoring lunches daily to ensure compliance.

prevent a recurrence of this non-compliance, the service has reinforced and reviewed its Healthy Eating Policy to ensure clear guidance is provided to parents/guardians regarding appropriate food choices for children's lunches. Healthy lunchbox guidelines have been re-communicated to all families and will continue to be shared regularly through the service's communication platforms. Ongoing monitoring of lunchboxes is carried out daily by staff, and any concerns are addressed promptly with parents/guardians. Nutrition and healthy eating will also be included as a standing agenda item at staff meetings to ensure continued awareness and consistent implementation of the policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents / screenshot of text message to parents; one week record of meals reheated.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 22. This regulation will be assessed at 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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents.

Staff members in each care room advised the inspector they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

The staff members were aware of the potential choking risks that grapes posed when asked by the inspectors.

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members were familiar with the importance of handwashing practice as a means to control the spread of infection in the service. They supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal and containment of used tissues and paper hand towel. Facilities were available for nappy changing. Cleaning schedules were maintained for the room environments which were observed to be clean and tidy.

Administration of Medication:

Medicine was not given at the time of the inspection; written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child. The staff members were familiar with required practices when administering medication in the service. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if required.

Safe Sleep:

There were no children attending who required sleep on the day of the inspection. A low-level bed and appropriate bed linen was available for any child who required sleep. The staff members demonstrated knowledge of the care of sleeping children in response to questions asked by the inspector.

A rest area was available for the children in the two care rooms if they wished to take a break from activities and rest.

Fire Safety:

Monthly fire drills had been carried out, and staff members were familiar with fire safety evacuation procedures from the service. The fire exits were not blocked.

Outing:

The person in charge confirmed that the service conducts outings. An outings policy was available.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The cupboard under the sink unit in sanitary area located off the main hallway not secured. The contents which were accessible to the children included two containers of shaving gel and two plastic razors which could cause harm to a child if they accessed them.
2. A double electrical socket at a level accessible to the preschool children did not have protective socket covers in place in room 1. This could cause harm to a child if they put an object into the socket.

Infection Control:

3. Nappy changes practices were observed on the day of inspection. On two occasions, the adult failed to wash their hands prior to commencing, remove the apron and the disposable gloves following the bagging up of the soiled nappy. Soiled nappies used aprons and used disposable gloves need to be disposed of at the same time following removal of the old nappy. The children's hands were not washed after nappy changing completed.
4. There was no foot pedal operated nappy change bin available for the hygienic disposal of used nappies. It is acknowledged that offensive nappies are disposed of immediately in the outdoor bin.
5. The children's perishable snacks were not refrigerated in room 2 despite a fridge being available.
6. A roll of paper was placed on the work surfaces and not in the wall mounted dispensers provided in the two sanitary areas and care rooms for the hygienic dispensing of paper towels.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Following the inspection, immediate corrective actions were implemented. The cupboard under the sink in the sanitary area has been secured and all hazardous items have been removed from children's reach.
2. Protective socket covers have been fitted to all accessible electrical sockets. To prevent a recurrence of the non-compliances identified, management has strengthened governance arrangements and oversight of health, safety and infection control practices within the service. Daily environmental and safety checks have been reviewed and updated to ensure hazardous items are securely stored, electrical safety measures are in place.

Infection Control:

3. Staff were immediately reminded of correct infection control and nappy changing procedures, including hand hygiene, use and disposal of PPE, and handwashing for children following nappy changes.
4. A foot-pedal operated nappy change bin has been put in place to support hygienic disposal practices. prevent a recurrence of the non-compliances identified, management has strengthened governance arrangements and oversight of health, safety and infection control practices within the service. Daily environmental and safety checks have been reviewed and updated to ensure hygiene standards are consistently maintained across all rooms.
5. All perishable snacks are now stored in the refrigerator provided. Food storage has been re-communicated to all staff and reinforced through supervision and refresher training. Responsibility for monitoring compliance has been clearly assigned to the Person in Charge, with regular audits, spot checks and staff supervision in place to ensure practices are consistently implemented in line with service policies and regulatory requirements.
6. Paper towels have been placed back into the wall-mounted dispensers in all sanitary and care areas. Responsibility for monitoring compliance has been clearly assigned to the Person in Charge, with regular audits, spot checks and staff supervision in place to ensure practices are consistently implemented in line with service policies and regulatory requirements.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photograph.
2. Photograph.

Infection Control:

3. Document.
4. Photograph.
5. No evidence submitted.
6. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 23. This regulation will be assessed at the next inspection.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The person in charge ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the two care rooms.
- (2) Not applicable.
- (3) (a)(b) The person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained. The inspectors' visit to the service was documented in the visitor's book on arrival.
- (4) The person in charge confirmed that the records were retained in storage for the required period.

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

- (2)
- (a) The first aid equipment was safely stored, in a conspicuous position in the care rooms inspected. Further supplies were stored in the entrance hallway of the building on the left-hand side.
- (b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children in each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) There was no person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) training on the premises and immediately available to the children on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that one staff member had completed paediatric first aid training and was immediately available to the children if required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Two members of staff have completed FAR training.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email communication from trainer confirming training completed for two members of staff.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 25(1). This regulation will be assessed at the next inspection.

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 firefighting 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 of fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill was 5 November 2025.
 - (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm was last serviced in October 2025.
 - (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

The children were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection by the adults caring for them both indoors in their care rooms and while using the sanitary areas.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 44 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
1. The pipework attached to the two sinks in sanitary area used by room 1 were exposed, accessible to the children and required to be covered.
 2. There was an area of exposed plaster in room 1 which required repair and repainting.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d)
1. Following the inspection, immediate corrective action was taken. The exposed pipework attached to the sinks in the sanitary area used by room 1 has been safely covered to prevent access by children. To prevent future issues, regular safety checks and maintenance have been implemented, staff are trained to report hazards promptly, and all repairs and inspections are documented to ensure the environment remains safe and well-maintained for children.
 2. The area of exposed plaster in room 1 has been repaired and repainted to ensure the premises are maintained in a safe and appropriate condition. These actions were completed promptly to address the issues identified and to ensure the environment is safe and suitable for children. To prevent future issues, regular safety checks and maintenance have been implemented, staff are trained to report hazards promptly, and all repairs and inspections are documented to ensure the environment remains safe and well-maintained for children.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photograph.
2. Photograph.

Summary Comment

The written response and photographic evidence submitted by the registered provider was reviewed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 29(d).