

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2023WW001
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Riverside Childcare Rathdrum
-------------------------	------------------------------

Address of Service:	Oak Springs, The Woods, Rathdrum, Co. Wicklow
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	A67 X665
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Michael Dunster
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	23/07/2025
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	19
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow
Inspection undertaken by:	H. Bourke
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	N/A
---------------------------------	-----

Description of service

This private childcare facility aims to provide sessional, part-time and full day care for children aged one year to six years of age. The service can accommodate a maximum number of 28 children at full capacity and is open from Monday to Friday between 08.00 hrs and 18.00 hrs.

The service is accommodated in a two storey, purpose-built premises. There are two care rooms available on the ground floor with a dedicated sleep room, a staff room and a kitchen.

There is one large enclosed outdoor space on the premises.

Staffing

There are eleven staff employed in the service and eight staff were present on the day of inspection. This included the manager and deputy manager, who were supernumerary and supported the adults in the care rooms for breaks and lunches. The registered provider was not present and does not work directly with the children attending the pre-school.

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

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

(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.

(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

Following a discussion with the manager and inspecting the staff roster it was confirmed that eleven adults are employed in the service, this includes the manager and assistant manager, these files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The service had a manager and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b)

The manager was on the premises at the time of the arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(c)

There was a clear management structure within the service.

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of eleven adults.

(c)

The required three-year Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for eleven adults.

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, in relation to one adult working in the pre-school. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

International police vetting was available for two adults working in the service who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Eleven staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)

The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were six adults employed to work directly with 19 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

The manager ensured that there were two adults on the premises at all times. This was confirmed by reviewing the staff roster.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The manager ensured that a record in writing of the above particulars, were kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection by an authorised person.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a), (h)-(k).

The manager made sure that a record in writing was kept of the above information in relation to the service.

(3)

The manager ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

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:

- All cleaning products were stored, out of the reach of children.
- The emergency exit routes in the pre-school rooms were clearly marked and free from obstruction.

- The entrance door to the service was appropriately secured to prevent children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised people from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The large outdoor play area, to the side and rear of the premises, was fenced in and gated to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to the roadway or any other source of danger.
- Children had no access to the kitchen area in the service.

Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Foot pedal bins were available in the sanitary areas for the safe disposal of used paper towels and other items that required disposing of.
- Individual bed linen was provided for the children. Staff stated that bed linen was laundered weekly and individually stored for each child.
- A system was in place for effective sterilisation of soothers.
- Hand washing following play and before morning snack time was observed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting disclosure for one adult was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. The outdoor play area was in need of attention. The grass in the front play area needed to be cut and areas needed reseeding. The outdoor area at the rear of the premises, had a large number of mixed weeds growing through the gravelled area and under the larger pieces of permanent play equipment for the children. Outdoor areas need to be safe and suitable places for children to play in.

Play areas need to be regularly examined and treated for weeds and other noxious plants if necessary. These plants could pose a health risk to children.

Infection Control:

3. There were no foot pedal bins in the Butterfly care room. Bins need to be pedal operated to prevent them from being opened by hand and risking hand contamination and for infection control purposes.
4. Following an observed nappy change in the Caterpillar room at 11.10am, both the child and the adult in the room used their hands to open the pedal bin to dispose of used paper towel. The adult was also observed opening the bin with their hand following cleaning down of the changing mat. Foot pedal bins need to be used correctly to prevent hands touching bin lids and risking cross contamination and for infection control purposes.

- The tabletop surface in the Caterpillar room was in very poor condition, with numerous areas of chipped paint across the top, which prevented effective cleaning of the table for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

- Garda Vetting Renewal was in process at the time of the inspection and arrived shortly after. It has been attached here. We have a new system in place to detect Garda Vetting going out of date with enough time to anticipate and reapply for the Renewal so it returns in time.
- The grass was cut shortly after our inspection and regular visits are arranged. Daily risk assessments are carried on ensuring the safety of the children at all times while using the garden. We do not use chemicals in our garden as they could be harmful but we do hand-weed the garden regularly. Our gardens are risk assessed daily and no plants that could pose a health risk to children have been found. Hand weeding has been arranged more regularly. Regular maintenance visits have been arranged to get the grass cut regularly as well as to control the amount of weeds in our garden.

Infection Control:

- The pedal bin had been replaced by a bigger non pedal bin before the inspection. The pedal bin was brought back in and a bigger bin was purchased and is now in the room. We made sure all team members were aware of the need to use pedal bins at all times and not to remove them from the room or replace them.
- All hand paper bins were replaced by bigger, taller bins as a suggestion by the inspector to encourage children to use the pedal instead of their hand. Staff were reminded of the use of the pedals instead of using their hands to open the bin. We placed pictures around the bin area reminding the children and staff to use the bin's pedal.
- We covered the tables with a counter film protector as a temporary fix. New tables will be purchased next month.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence for points 1-2 of renewed Garda vetting and of the outdoor area following weeding, grass cutting and an outdoor risk assessment were submitted with the CAPA response.

Infection Control:

Photographic evidence for points 3-5 of new larger foot pedal bins in rooms, the room tables covered, and an indoor risk assessment were submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliances found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 23 General Safety and Infection Control and will be reviewed on 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.

(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)

The manager ensured that each child attending the service was checked in and checked out on each day of attendance.

(3)(a)(i)-(iv)

The manager ensured that no person other than the above list of people were allowed access to the pre-school service.

(b)

A record in writing was kept of any person having had access to the pre-school service from the above list.

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)

The manager ensured that there were an adequate number of adults trained in FAR (First Aid Response) available to the children at all times during their day.

(2)(a)

A suitably equipped first aid box was located in an accessible place on each floor of the service.

(b)

A first aid box was available to the children attending 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 firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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)

There was a record of fire drills having taken place in the pre-school service on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill was the 19th of June 2025.

(b)

There was a maintenance record for firefighting equipment dated the 6th of August 2024.

(2)(c)

The above records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in each pre-school room and in other areas around the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

There was no current maintenance record of smoke alarms in the premises.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(a)

The company was contacted and a service arranged. We have arranged with the company that they contact us when a service is due.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(a)

Photographic evidence of a certificate of service of fire alarms for the service was submitted with the CAPA response

.

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 26 (1)(a) and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 manager was able to demonstrate that the children attending the pre-school service were adequately supervised throughout their day.

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

Compliance Information

- (a)
The building was of sound and a stable structure
- (b)
The building appeared to be safe and secure.
- (c)
There was adequate light, heating and ventilation in the service.
- (e)

There were suitable sanitary facilities in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(d)

The walls in both care rooms were heavily marked from items having been stuck to them and the windowsills in both rooms had chipped paint and were marked. Both the walls and windowsills needed re-painting.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d)

We have now purchased all the needed materials to re-paint our room's walls with suitable paint and also the windowsills. We recently painted one room and will be doing the second soon. Staff are aware of the damage reusable adhesive did previously to the paint. Regular inspections of the walls, furniture and windows are being carried on by management.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d)

Photographic evidence of the redecorated care room was submitted with the CAPA response.

Summary Comment

The above actions have addressed the non-compliance found on the day of inspection in relation to regulation 29 (d) and will be reviewed on next inspection.