

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2025DR004

Name of Service: Safari Childcare

Address of Service: 50/51 Patrick Streetwa, Dunlaoighre, Co. Dublin

Eircode: A96 W7T3

Name of Registered Provider: Cian Powell, Kevin McGuinness

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 05/12/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	41	PM	29
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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
Inspection undertaken by:	H Sutherland and R Duff
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
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Description of service

Safari Childcare is a privately owned early years service located in a residential area in Dun Laoghaire, South Dublin. The service operates from a purpose-built facility and comprises of eight care rooms, two designated sleep rooms, and two fully enclosed outdoor spaces. Full day, part time and sessional care and education are provided for children aged 1 to 6 years Monday to Friday from 8.00am to 6.00pm. On the day of inspection, six care rooms were in operation: Toddler 1, Wobbler 1, Wobbler 2, ECCE, Preschool 1 and Preschool 2.

Staffing

There are currently 17 adults employed to work in the service including the person in charge and a cook. On the day of inspection there were 17 adults present including, the person in charge, the area manager, a cook and 14 adults working directly with the children. The registered providers were not present for the inspection and do not work in the service.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19. As a result, the scope of the inspection included Toddler 1, Wobbler 1, ECCE and Preschool 2.

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, the area manager, 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.*

(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 a named person to deputise when required.
- (b) The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived at the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection.
- (c) There was a clear management structure in place in the service which was confirmed with staff members and the person in charge during discussions with the inspectors.

(2) A review of the roster and conversation with the person in charge confirmed that the registered provider currently employs 17 adults in the service.

- (a) Twenty-seven written and validated references were available from past employers.
- (b) Seven written and validated references were available from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for 18 adults.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 15 adults who had lived outside of the State for a period of 6 months or more as adults.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the 16 adults who work directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE).

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (d) Police vetting was not available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six months as an adult.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had not been carried out prior to one adult commencing employment in the service as detailed above.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff member has applied for the required police clearance and is currently awaiting the outcome. In the interim, police vetting requirements were reviewed and implemented and the working hours of the staff member have been amended and are now scheduled outside of the service's operating hours.

Recruitment and onboarding procedures have been reviewed to ensure full compliance prior to commencement of employment. A mandatory pre-employment checklist is now in place and must be completed before rostering. Police vetting, including checks for periods spent outside the state will be verified prior to appointment. Regular audits of staff files will be carried out by management to ensure ongoing compliance on the staff member's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation received and reviewed by the inspector.

Summary Comment

The actions stated by the registered providers have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliances.

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 on the day of inspection.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection. There were 13 adults working directly with 41 children in the morning and 11 adults working directly with 29 children in the afternoon.

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-

(a) each child's learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and

(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

The inspectors observed appropriate and suitable care practices throughout the inspection. Staff reported that the service provides all of the meals for the children. On the day of the inspection, children were offered fresh fruit for their morning snack and breaded chicken and wedges for their dinner. Staff were observed sitting with children during mealtimes and engaging in positive interactions, creating a calm, sociable experience for the children. Self-feeding was encouraged, with support provided when needed. Drinking water was stored at children's level and was freely available during the inspection. Children were supported to be independent and responsible, for example younger children were observed taking off their own coats when they returned from outdoor play and removing their shoes in preparation for sleep. Older children were observed tidying equipment away following play and being helpers at mealtimes. Children's personal care needs were met promptly and sensitively, including nappy changing, toileting and handwashing, ensuring comfort and promoting good hygiene practices. Younger children slept at a designated time after dinner, and suitable rest areas were available in all care rooms to allow children to take a break from activities if required.

The atmosphere in the service was relaxed for the duration of the inspection, and staff were warm and affectionate in their interactions with children. Transitions were well managed, and children appeared confident and content, moving from one activity to the next. For example, staff in the Toddler and Preschool 2 rooms were observed to signal a transition with songs, providing children with advance warning and enabling them to prepare for the approaching change. Staff described how they share information with parents about children's experiences on a daily basis through the use of an online application and during morning and evening handovers. Staff worked well as a team and shared information about the children's needs with one another.

The care rooms were bright, and materials were laid out on low level open shelving, allowing children freedom to find and return items of interest. Age-appropriate materials were available to promote children's learning and development including, rest areas with books, push along toys, small world materials, sensory play materials, musical instruments, mark making materials, role play, construction materials, and puzzles. Storage boxes were labelled with text and images, and family walls were displayed, supporting children's sense of identity and belonging within the service. Children were observed moving freely around their environment without obstruction. Child size tables and chairs were available, allowing children to be independent and sit comfortably during mealtimes and activities. Play was guided by the children, and weekly and monthly documented activity plans were on display in the care rooms. Two fully enclosed outdoor areas were available and contained materials such as, push along toys, bikes, rockers and balls.