

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2025FL006
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Ark Childcare
-------------------------	---------------

Address of Service:	The Avenue, Ravens Mill, Rolestown, Swords, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	--

Eircode:	K67 C8P4
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Amber-Rose Keane
-------------------------------------	------------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	13/01/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	Not applicable.
-----------------------------------	----	---	----	-----------------

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Y Kelly
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.
---------------------------------	-----------------

Description of service

Ark Childcare is a purpose built creche facility located in a residential area of Swords, Co Dublin. The service is the sole service operated by the registered provider. The premises is purposely built and consists of four care rooms, a cot room, sanitary accommodation, kitchen and a staff room. There is an outdoor play area to the rear of the building. There are 4 care rooms in the service namely the Wobbler room, Toddler room, Pre-school 1 room and Pre-school 2 room. Neither the Pre-school 1 room nor the Pre-school 2 room were operating on the day of the inspection.

Staffing

The registered provider/director and two other adults work directly with the children attending the full day service. One of the directors was present on the day of the inspection and also carries out administrative, cooking and housekeeping duties and deputises when required. The registered provider manages the oversight of the service and was available to provide cover where needed in the rooms. There is another director who does not work in the service on a daily basis.

Methodology

Tusla 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. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the regulations 9, 11 and 19. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler Room and the Toddler Room. The Pre-school 1 Room and Pre-school 2 Rooms were closed on the day of the inspection.

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 registered provider, director, 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

(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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;

Compliance Information

(1)(a) There was a designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person to deputise as required.

(b)The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived announced to the service at 09:30am.

(2) The files for 3 adults including the registered provider were reviewed, and Garda vetting for 5 adults including two of the directors was reviewed and the following was recorded:

(a) Five validated and written references were available from past employers.

(b) One validated and written reference was available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 5 adults whose Garda vetting was reviewed. Garda vetting disclosures that were available demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring the service to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International Police vetting was available for 2 adults who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 3 adults whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in 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 eligible by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality.

(7)(a) The registered provider ensured that employees were supervised and provided with appropriate induction.

A staff induction checklist documented that staff completed the following induction training;

- Day 1 of induction: Welcome and Orientation, Child Safeguarding and Children First, Health and Safety, Policies and Procedures, Classroom, Documentation and Systems.
- Week 1 of induction: Job role and responsibilities, Practise and Observation, Health, Safety and Compliance, Communication and Teamwork, Administration, Review and Support.

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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Wobbler room there was 1 staff member working with 2 children aged 1 years 1 month to 1 year 6 months.
- In the Toddler room there was 1 staff member working with 5 children aged 2 years 3 months to 3 years 6 months. Children from the Toddler room and the Pre-school rooms were in the room together. It was discussed that this group of children also have access to the Pre-school 2 room in the afternoon.

The registered provider was available to support staff across care rooms as required.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present in the service at all times.

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

Compliance Information

1(a) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Children's meals were provided by an external catering company following a four-week seasonal menu plan and reheated by a staff member. Staff discussed that children are offered cereal for breakfast, crackers and cheese for morning snack and soup and bread for tea. On the day of the inspection the children had spaghetti for dinner.

- The children’s personal care needs were attended to promptly. Nappies were changed at scheduled times and more frequently as needed. The staff member used the opportunity to engage with and chat to the children.
- There was a cot room with three cots available for children under two years that required sleep in the service. Two child who required sleep, slept in a cot in the cot room at their scheduled sleep time. There were also two cocoon beds and stackable beds available for children aged over two years who required sleep.
- Children’s independence was supported. Children were free to choose materials independently from defined interest areas. Children were observed to wash hands independently at child sized sinks in the care rooms.

Supporting relationships:

- Practitioners demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service. The early years practitioners demonstrated sensitivity and responsiveness to each child’s individual needs and supported children’s inclusion and involvement in play. The early years practitioners engaged in floor play with the children supporting children who have recently started in the service with settling in and becoming familiar with their surroundings.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a ‘Family Wall’ displayed at with photographs of children’s families and a birthday chart included children’s photographs. Children’s names and photographs were displayed on their cubbies containing children’s coats and bags which supported children’s identity and belonging in the service.
- Practitioners communicate with parents through use of a digital software application to share information about children’s care needs such as nappy changing, food and sleep. Practitioners have conversations with the parents during collection times.

Physical and material environment:

- The furniture provided in the care room was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care room. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children’s independence in play. The rooms were divided into different areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for children. In the Wobbler room, areas of interests were age appropriate and materials for children under two years old included a ball pool and soft mat, large foam blocks and push pull toys for physical play. There were stacking toys, wooden blocks and jigsaws for fine motor development. Small world

resources included a wooden train, animals and toys for transporting. There was an armchair for adults to sit whilst feeding young children and one child was observed being given a bottle before sleep time.

- In the Toddler room, there was a home corner with wooden kitchen, toy food, dress up clothes, beauty box, buggies and dolls and small world items such as a zoo with animals, and transportation toys such as cars, trucks, helicopter and rocket to support imaginative and interactive play. There were construction materials to include plastic building blocks. There were art materials to include paper and crayons, and chalk board with chalk and duster to support mark making for children, and playdough to provide sensory play opportunities for children. There was a selection of books which supported storytelling opportunities and children's language development.
- A fully enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the service with a large slide and house. It was discussed that equipment for outdoor play included a kitchen, bikes, balls and water tray which are stored indoors.

Programme of Activities and its Implementation:

- Conversations with staff ascertained that the service had a play-based child led curriculum.
- Children were observed engaging in an activity with blocks of ice containing animals in small bowls using small wooden child sized toy hammers to break the ice. The practitioner was observed to support children's imaginative and dramatic play such as playing 'doctors' and dressing up.
- Children's learning and development is documented through observations which is shared with parents through a digital software application.