

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL343
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Name of Service:	Woodlands Crèche & Montessori
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Address of Service:	1 Dun Emer Rise, Lusk, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K45 KX03
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Name of Registered Provider:	Theresa Ryan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	11/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	60	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne & E Hosford
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Woodlands Crèche and Montessori is situated in Lusk Co. Dublin and is registered to operate from 7.30am to 6.00pm from Monday to Friday. It offers full-day, part-time and sessional childcare to children aged from 1 to 6 years of age and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for eligible pre-school children from 9.00am to 12.00 midday daily for 38 weeks each year. Two of the four care rooms in the service, namely the Wobbler Room and the Toddler Room are located on the ground floor of the premises, while Montessori Room 1 and Montessori Room 2 are located on the first floor. There is a designated sleep room adjacent to the Wobbler Room with six standard cots, and a fully enclosed outdoor play area adjoins the premises

Staffing

The registered provider employs 17 staff members in the service consisting of the person in charge and 13 staff members who work directly with the pre-school children, one staff member currently on statutory leave and two ancillary staff members employed to clean the service. The service is currently facilitating one student for work experience who was present on the day of inspection The registered provider does 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 unannounced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child, safety, premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 26, 28 and 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of a child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child. Regulation 11 Staffing levels was assessed across all rooms.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Wobbler, Toddler and Montessori 1 rooms and did not include the Montessori 2 room.

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, deputy person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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.

(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

(2) It was confirmed by the person in charge that two new childcare staff members had been employed in the service since the last inspection on the 7 October 2025. The files of these new staff members along with one student on work experience since 19 November 2025 were reviewed.

(b) Two written and validated references were available in relation to one adult from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the three 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 not required as the three adults had not lived outside of the State for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the two adults who worked 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) (b) Two written and validated references were not available for two adults.

(3) Documentary evidence was not available to demonstrate that the procedures outlined in paragraph (2)(a)(b) had been completed prior to two adults starting in the service and allowed access to the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) (a)(b) Two validated written references obtained for one staff member. Second staff member no longer works in the service.

(3) The person in charge will ensure that two written references for future new staff members, are available and validated.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2) (a)(b) Two validated written references

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the evidence and actions submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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,

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

On the morning of the inspection there were 10 adults working directly with 60 children aged between 1 to 6 years and in the afternoon of the inspection there were 7 adults working with 38 children aged from 1 to 6 years.

2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service as follows:

Morning:

- Wobbler Room - 2 adults to 9 children aged between 1 years to 2 years,
- Toddler Room - 3 adults to 12 children aged between 1 years 11 months to 3 years,
- Montessori room 1 - 2 adults to 19 children aged between 3 years to 5 years,
- Montessori room 2 - 3 adults to 20 children aged between 3 years to 5 years,

Afternoon:

- Wobbler Room - 2 adults to 9 children aged between 1 years to 2 years,
- Toddler Room - 2 adults to 10 children aged between 1 years 11 months to 3 years,
- Montessori room 1 - 2 adults to 12 children aged between 3 years to 5 years,
- Montessori room 2 - 1 adult to 7 children aged between 3 years to 5 years,

The person in charge and deputy person in charge were available in a supernumerary capacity and covered in rooms as required.

(8)(a) On review of the service roster it was observed that two adults were on the premises during the operation

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

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

Basic Needs:

- The service provided meals and snacks at regular intervals and a hot meal to the children. On the day of inspection, the inspectors observed a hot meal, supplied by an external caterer, was served at 11.30am downstairs and at 12.00pm upstairs in the care rooms of pasta marinara with meatballs and at 2.30pm downstairs and at 3.00 pm upstairs, an afternoon snack of food supplied from home was served. At 10am the service provided a snack. Water was available in each care room for the children to drink.
- Nappy changing and toileting were respectful and positive experiences for the children, and staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing.
- All children in each room were observed to enjoy outdoor play during the inspection.
- Children's need for sleep and rest was met through the provision of comfortable rest areas available in each care room. Cots with individual bedding were available to the children who required sleep.
- In the Wobbler and Toddler rooms, the transitions from outdoor play to dinner to sleep were smooth, with cots and low beds prepared, rooms darkened, and white noise played creating a restful environment.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff were observed to be engaged with the children during reading time and play time with positive interactions. They were responsive to the children needs.
- Staff were observed to have respectful interactions with the children through the use of soft tones and positive non-verbal communication strategies.
- Staff members supported each other in the provision of care to the children.

Physical and Material Environment

- The care rooms were clean, bright, organised and well laid out in defined areas of interest.
- Low level shelving and child sized accessible and available tables and chairs supported children's independence.
- The materials and equipment provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had the freedom to choose from materials and equipment accessible and available to them.
- Family and birthday wall displays were displayed in the service which supported children's well-being and identity and belonging.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Cosy areas were present with books accessible offering a quiet comfortable area for children to rest and relax during the day.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed, the surface of which was covered with soft matting tiles. There were two overhead shelters to enable the children to access the outdoor area during inclement weather. The outdoor toys were suitable and available and included a climbing frame with a slide, a climbing frame, a playhouse with climbing wall and two slides and outdoor play kitchen and sensory activities in boxes for water play and sand play.

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:

- On the unannounced arrival at the service by the inspectors, the entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to the children throughout the inspection.
- No trailing flexes were observed, blind cords were secure and cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- The outdoor area was a safe and secure environment with play equipment and materials clean, in good condition and suitable for use by the children.

Infection Control:

- Handwashing facilities for hand hygiene included thermostatically controlled water, soap and paper towels. Handwashing was observed after nappy changing, after bathroom visits and before mealtimes.
- Nappy changing facilities were available for the children and nappy changing was completed for the children, at set times or when required in accordance with the service policy.
- Soothers were labelled and stored in personalised containers when not in use.
- During sleep time, cots and low stackable beds were positioned with the recommended 50 centimetres between each child.

Safe Sleep:

- Shoes and clothing were removed from children while they slept.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Ten-minute sleep checks were completed for colour, breathing, position while children slept.
- The temperature of the cot room and the toddler room at sleep time were recorded on the sleep check records.
- Sleep risk assessments signed by parents were available for the two children under two years of age not sleeping in cots.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. In the Toddler room at sleep time, two children under two years of age were observed to sleep on low stackable beds which are at variance to the sleep guidelines issued by Tusla in September 2023.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

1. The two children are now over 2 years old and therefore sleeping in low stackable beds.
Floor beds suitable for children under 24 months will be used and permission from parents will be completed when required to meet compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. None

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed. This will be reviewed 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 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.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was reviewed by the inspectors for fire drills completed and the last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on the 20 April 2026.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment available demonstrated they were last serviced 20 February 2026 and for smoke alarms demonstrated they were last serviced on 26 February 2026.
- (4) The fire drill procedure was displayed in the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An insurance certificate reviewed demonstrated that the service was insured for a maximum of 75 children per session with an expiry date of 27 March 2027.

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)
- Areas of poor maintenance and repair were observed in the service, as follows:
 - In the sanitary facility upstairs, one toilet had no toilet seat and the area behind this toilet was damaged by water causing presence of mould and an unfinished surface which cannot be effectively cleaned.
 - In the Toddler room, parts of the wall beside the windows, was in poor repair with exposed plaster board.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- Toilet seat has been replaced, and water damaged area has been treated and painted.
 - Exposed plaster board beside windows has been fixed and painted.

More regular maintenance checks will be completed on the premises.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic Evidence

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29 has been adequately addressed.