

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WX076
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Name of Service:	Little Lambs Creche and Montessori
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Address of Service:	49 Ardmore, Carnew Road, Gorey, Co. Wexford
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Eircode:	Y25 A254
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sarah Regan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Ely Hospital, Ferrybank, Wexford.
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Ryan
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).

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Description of service

Little Lambs Creche and Montessori is a pre-school service providing full day, part-time and sessional care for children aged 2-6 years, and provides the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.

The premises is located within a residential area in the outskirts of Gorey. The service consists of five care rooms between two buildings. The Toddler room (2-3 years) and downstairs ECCE room (3-4 years) is located on the ground floor, and the upstairs ECCE room is located on the first floor of the main building. A cabin which is adjacent to the building caters for an ECCE group attending on a sessional basis. There is an enclosed outdoor area located at back of the premises which is directly accessible from the main building and cabin. The service caters for school age children also.

Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge daily and a second named staff member is available to deputise when the registered provider is not present. All the staff working directly with children in the service held the minimum of level 5 and above qualifications in Childcare and Early Childhood Care and Education and Montessori.

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.

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Regulation 9(1)(2)(4) – Management and Recruitment,
Regulation 11(1)(2) – Staffing Levels,
Regulation 19 (1)(a) - Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
Regulation 25 – First Aid,
Regulation 26 – Fire Safety and
Regulation 28 – Insurance.

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

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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.*

(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

Regulation 9 assesses whether the registered provider can demonstrate that effective management structures are in place and appropriately qualified staff have been recruited to work with the children attending the service.

The early years inspector reviewed 12 staff files and 1 student file on the day of inspection. The registered provider demonstrated through documentation that they had completed the necessary recruitment processes when new staff and the student were being taken on. All staff were suitably qualified and vetted to work with children attending the service.

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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

Regulation 11 assesses whether the registered provider can ensure that an adequate number of staff are available at all times to meet the needs of the children as specified under the above regulation.

The early years inspector reviewed the number of children and staff present in the service twice during the day.

The staff to child ratios exceeded the requirements of the regulation. The staff rota indicated all staff present on the day were rostered to work.

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

Regulation 19 assesses whether the registered provider supports the health, wellbeing and development of the children while attending the service. The following observations and discussions with staff and children reflected the children's experience within the service on the day of inspection taking into consideration basic care needs, supporting relationships and the play environments.

The service consisted of four rooms providing a warm and friendly environment for the children attending the service. The playrooms and environment offered children a balance of Montessori-inspired materials alongside play based play opportunities that support creativity, problem-solving, and social development. Staff supported the children by setting out activities at different times and allowing the children to play freely during the day.

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Children from all rooms enjoyed time outside during the day, with the daily routine flexible and led by the children. They had wet gear and wellies to wear on days where the weather was wet and cold. The inspector observed staff applying sunscreen during the afternoon. Children were observed to transition calmly between their playrooms and outdoors during the day. The outdoor area provided opportunities for a variety of play experiences including sensory play, gross motor, messy and imaginative play. There was sufficient space for the children. The area consisted of a variety of spaces including a covered area and mud kitchen. Staff brought the children's water bottles and beakers outside during outdoor play times.

All children enjoyed their main meal together in the kitchen. The dinner time observed during the inspection was relaxed and a social experience for the children. Staff helped the children with feeding, offering extra portions of food and drinks and providing alternative food to children who didn't like the dinner made on the day. Attention to personal hygiene was observed, with staff seen to clean children's faces after eating and periodically during the day.

Children freely used the toilets during the day, and the staff were observed balancing between supervising the children, providing help when needed, prompting handwashing and supporting the children develop their independent skills.

Staff discussed with the inspector how they facilitated toilet training for children when they showed signs of readiness in coordination with the parents.

Children were settled, familiar and confident in their surroundings and were observed enjoying playing games and engaged in play and various activities. They enjoyed talking with the inspector, talking about their rooms, teachers and toys and what their favourite things about creche were.

Staff were observed to speak to each other in a professional and warm manner, working as a team to meet the changing needs of the children throughout the day. It was evident that staff were familiar with the individual children's likes, dislikes and habits. Interactions were gentle and kind, with chatting and laughter heard. Staff were professional and friendly when talking with parents at collection times.

Children's artwork, photographs, family walls and birthday charts were displayed throughout the playrooms and service, supporting the children's sense of identity and belonging in the service.

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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

Regulation 23 requires the registered provider to ensure the safety of the children while attending the service.

The early years inspector reviewed this regulation through assessment of four areas:

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection. Stair gates and a low-level handrail were in place on the stairs. The outdoor area was fully enclosed to the rear of the house. Cleaning agents and medication were stored out of children's reach. Emergency exits were unobstructed. A sample of six accident and incident forms were reviewed and were fully completed and signed.

Infection Control:

The toilets were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Children were observed being supervised with washing their hands before eating, after messy play and after toileting. Staff were observed to attend to children's personal hygiene after eating by cleaning their faces and hands with individual warm face clothes. On the day the inspector did not observe any nappy changes as none of the children attending were wearing nappies.

Administration of Medication:

There was an administration of medication policy. The staff discussed with the inspector the procedure to follow when a child required administration of medicine. A sample of four medication record forms including one individual health care plan were reviewed on the day and were completed in line with the service's policy. Medication was stored out of reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

The staff discussed with the inspector how children's sleep needs are met while attending the service. One child attending slept after the main meal was served. The staff set up a sleep bed in the toddler room, which was used for children who wished to sleep during the day. They closed the blinds to ensure the room was dimmed, relaxing and conducive for sleep and rest. Staff were observed to remain in the room while the child settled to sleep and

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carry out sleep checks, recording the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes in line with good safe sleep practices.

Sufficient sleep beds were available to meet the needs of children who wished to sleep while attending the service. Appropriate bed linen was in use for sleeping children.

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

Regulation 25 requires the registered provider ensure that sufficient staff are appropriately trained in first aid and available at all times to the children. Records reviewed by the early years inspector demonstrated that six staff were trained in first aid responder (FAR) and the staff rota indicated that trained staff were present during the opening hours of the service.

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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.*

Compliance Information

Regulation 26 requires the registered provider ensure that all staff are familiar with fire safety measures. Records assessed by the early years inspector indicated that all staff received fire training and were familiar with the requirement to carry out monthly fire drills.

A new fire detection system had been installed since the last inspection and maintenance records of firefighting equipment were up to date.

Notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in the service, and staff advised the inspector of their evacuation routes.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid certificate of insurance for full day care for 32 children.