

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY046		
Name of Service:	Castle Creche		
Address of Service:	St. Anthony's House, Off St Lawrence Road, Clontarf.		
Eircode:	D03 TY23		
Name of Registered Provider:	Rachel Doyle		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	14/07/2026		
No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM 25
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F		
Inspection undertaken by:	JA. McKimm		
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

Castle Creche is a privately operated full day care service located on the first floor of a parish community centre in a residential area in Dublin 3. The service is open from Monday to Friday, 8.00 am-5:45pm catering for up to 50 children aged 0-6 years. The service comprises of three care rooms, a cot room, sanitary facilities, and an office which is in a cabin to the rear of the premises. The care rooms include; the Baby room which caters for children aged 1-1.5 years, Toddler room which caters for children aged 1-2 years, and Pre Montessori room which caters for children aged 2-3 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service has the use a large green space to the rear of the building for outdoor activities which is a shared facility with other groups operating from the community centre.

Staffing

Ten staff are currently employed in the service including the registered provider. The registered provider who is also the person in charge and the deputy person in charge work in a supernumerary capacity in the service along with eight early years practitioners who work directly with children.

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 and health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

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- Regulation 15 Record in Relation to Pre-School Child
- Regulation 19 (1)(a)-Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 – Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the baby room and the outdoor play area. Regulation 11 was inspected across all rooms.

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

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Statutory Notices

Notice	Date Served	Detail
Improvement Notice IN0273	14/07/2026	The registered provider did not ensure that the procedures required to be adopted in relation to garda vetting were followed for three staff members who had direct access to children which may pose a safeguarding risk.
Status	Action was taken by the registered provider immediately following the service of the Notice and the provider submitted a detailed response with corrective and preventive actions which were accepted by the Inspectorate. This statutory notice is closed.	

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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*
- (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,*
- (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.

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Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that;
 - (a) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed either the person in charge or the deputy person in charge were rostered to be present during the operational hours of the service.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff reported being aware of this.
- (2) Following a review of previous inspection information, information available on inspection and discussion with the registered provider it was determined that five new staff members had been employed since the previous inspection. A Garda vetting disclosure for the registered provider was reviewed along with the files of the five new staff. In addition, garda vetting for four adults whose disclosures were identified as due for renewal were requested for review.
 - (a) Ten validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting was available for ten adults however, 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. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
 - (d) Police vetting was available for four adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Five adults 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.

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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

- (1) The registered provider ensured there was adequate staff available to the children at all times during the day for example seven staff were working directly with twenty-six children on the morning of inspection and seven staff working directly with twenty-five children on the afternoon of inspection. The person in charge was available to provide support to the care rooms as needed.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children.

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;*

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(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-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,

(b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured a full record in writing was maintained for (a)-(i). A sample of 12 records were reviewed and were observed to be complete. All the required information was completed.

(3) All records and documentation requested by the inspection team were available for review.

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 activities, interactions, materials and equipment were observed to support children's learning and development:

Basic Needs

- Children were observed to have the opportunity to move freely through their care room and independently access play experiences of their choice.
- Nappy changing was completed on a regular basis, and this was observed to be a timely, pleasant experience with warm respectful interactions observed between adults and children.
- Children were provided with regular meals and snacks, the food served was reflected in the service menu. On the morning of the inspection children in the care rooms were served a snack of fruit and rice cakes. A hot lunch of beef stew with mashed potatoes was served at 11.15am. An afternoon snack that is brought from home and is refrigerated in all care rooms. A further snack is supplied by the service.

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Supporting Relationships.

- Staff within the service were observed to interact with children in a calm, soothing and respectful manner. Children were noted to be offered physical comfort and soothed if showing signs of needing regulation and reassurance which supported the child's emotional wellbeing.
- Staff were observed to speak to each other in respectful and warm manner.
- Staff discussed how parents are welcomed into the service. A new child was settling into the baby room on the day of inspection and staff were observed to chat and engage with parent in an amicable and friendly manner. In addition, staff were observed engaging with parents at arrival and collection times.

Physical and Material Environment.

- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and appropriate for children attending, with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low-level units which nurtured independence and facilitated choice.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available to the children, providing a comfortable area to eat snacks and take part in tabletop activities.
- Toys and materials were stored on low and accessible shelves and were visible and easily accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity.

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 inspector the entrance door leading into the premises on the first floor was appropriately secured with keypad access to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises throughout the inspection. The inspector was asked to sign the visitors book on arrival in the service.
- There were no trailing flexes in care rooms.
- Children's food brought from home which contained perishable items was stored appropriately in the fridge in each care room.

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- Children from the Toddler room were observed to walk in pairs holding handrails on the staircase when accessing outdoor play. This was overseen by staff who were vigilant to associated risk and the children's safety.

Infection Control:

- Soothers were individually labelled and stored in separate containers in the baby room.
- Foot operated pedal bins were in use for the disposal of waste in the care rooms and sanitary facilities. These were observed to be in good working order and staff used them appropriately.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were noted to be aware of safe sleep practices and children were observed to be monitored while sleeping every 10 minutes. Staff discussed how they checked the breathing, position, and colour of each child.
- Outer clothing was removed from the children before sleep time.
- Children under two years of age were provided with a cot for sleeping.
- An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was maintained for sleeping children over one years of age.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency and fire exits were signposted and unobstructed and staff were aware of the evacuation procedures and location of the assembly point. The children's attendance book was monitored to ensure staff knew how many children were present in the care room and during outdoor play. This ensured a safe evacuation of the children in the event of an emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN 0273 served.
- The water temperature in two wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation exceeded the recommended temperature of 43°C. Temperatures of 54.8°C at 11.15am and of 45.0°C at 11.17am respectively were recorded by the inspector. This posed a potential scald risk to the children. No children were observed to use the hand measuring 54.8°C on the day of inspection and children were supervised on a 1:1 basis when in this area. It is acknowledged that the registered provider took action to mitigate the risk, placing out of use signage on hand basin, informing all staff that it was out of use and contacting a plumber who arrive within 45 minutes to the service on the day of inspection.

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3. An unsecured large mirror, a pop tent and wooden wall mounts were located behind two benches in the corridor where children were observed to sit prior to nappy changing. This posed a potential safety risk.

Infection Control:

4. Nappy changing procedure was at variance to service policy and posed a potential risk of infection to children.
In four out of five nappy changes observed by the inspector:
 - Staff did not wash their hands after nappy changing.
 - The nappy changing mat was not cleaned after use.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN 0273 served.
2. Work was carried out installing new Thermostatic mixing valves on sink in bathroom. All other sinks were tested and have mixing valves, these were adjusted and are now working correctly. Water temps are now checked daily, and this has been included in the daily cleaning schedule.
3. The mirror, pop up tent and wooden wall mounts were immediately removed and stored in shed in the garden. Going forward any surplus equipment will be removed from premises and stored in shed.

Infection Control:

4. Staff were retrained on nappy changing procedures in addition signage was placed in each care room to reinforce this.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. See Statutory Notice section in relation to Improvement Notice IN 0273 served.
2. Evidence submitted.
3. Photographic evidence submitted.

Infection Control:

4. Photographic and documentary evidence submitted.

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Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under regulation 23 have been addressed.

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) There was documentary evidence to show that five adults held certification in First Aid Response training and that one adult was rostered to be available at all times to the children attending the preschool.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) The registered provider did not ensure that a first aid box was available to children when they accessed the outdoor area posing a potential safety risk as it may delay children in receiving first aid. To access the outdoor area children, walk down a staircase from the service on the first floor, walk through a reception area and walk around the back of the community centre.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) Staff were informed that a first aid box must be always brought on outings and to the garden area. Three new fully stocked first aid bags were purchased and hung at the door to each care room. Signage was placed at the door in each care room with a reminder notice that first aid bags must be brought outside at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic and documentary evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventive actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under regulation 25 has been addressed.

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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.*
- (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) The records available demonstrated that fire drills are held monthly within the service and the service conducted a fire drill on 17 June 2026.
 - (b) Records demonstrated that the firefighting equipment including smoke alarms had been serviced annually, with the last service taking place on the 12 May 2026.
- (2) All records and documentation requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.