

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY159
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Windfort Creche Ltd
-------------------------	---------------------

Address of Service:	Windfort, Headford, Co. Galway
----------------------------	--------------------------------

Eircode:	H91 D524
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Marian McDonagh
-------------------------------------	-----------------

Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	--------------------------------

Date of Inspection:	18/08/2026
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park Hospital, Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Description of service

Windfort Creche Ltd is a private early years care and education facility which opened in 2003 and is attached to the registered provider's home. It provides a range of services including full day care, part-time and sessional services. While registered to accommodate children aged from 0-6 years it is currently accommodating children from 1 to 6 years of age. Opening hours are from 08:00 to 17:30, Monday to Friday, for 50 weeks of the year. The Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme operates within these hours from 09:00 – 12:00.

The service is in the rural area of Windfort near Headford, in Co Galway. Four care rooms are available namely- Cubs, Meerkats, Pre-school and Monkeys (not in use over summer holidays, only as a sleep room after lunch). In addition, there is a kitchen where the service meals are prepared, children's and adult sanitary areas and a dedicated sleep room for children from the Cubs care room. The outdoor play areas are located at the rear of the service.

Staffing

There are seven adults employed to work directly with the children including the registered provider.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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, 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.*

(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-

- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider was the person in charge and a named person was available to deputise as required.
 - (b) The staff roster indicated that either the person in charge or manager were on the premises while the early years children were present.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (2) The staff roster indicated and the registered provider stated that no new staff had been employed since the last inspection on 25 July 2025. Therefore, garda vetting renewal for five existing adults was reviewed.
- (c) Garda vetting renewal was available for one of five adults for whom it was required. 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.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the early years children while they were present in the service.
- (2) Documentary evidence in the form of the staff roster indicated that adult child ratios were met. There were 5 adults working directly with 25 early years children in the morning and with 24 children in the afternoon. The registered provider was observed covering breaks during the day.

Cubs (12 months – 24 months)

There was 1 adult working with 5 children in both the morning and afternoon.

Meerkats (2 years – 2 years 6 months)

There was 1 adult working with 6 children in the morning and the afternoon.

Pre-school (3 years – 5 years)

There were 2 adults working with 14 children in the morning and 13 children in the afternoon.

(8)

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- (a) The registered provider ensured that there were at least two adults on the premises while the children were attending the service.

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

Basic needs:

- Food and snacks were noted to be healthy and nutritious and were served at regular intervals throughout the day. The hot meal of bacon, cabbage, carrots, turnips and potatoes was noted to be served at 12:05 in the Cubs care room.
- Staff were observed actively supporting children to feed themselves with spoons and assisting others where necessary.
- The atmosphere was relaxed with staff engaging the children in social conversation and giving the children time to finish their food without being rushed.
- Age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery were available for each age group ensuring the children could eat safely and work towards eating independently.
- Children in the Pre-school and Meerkat care rooms were observed to have access to water throughout the day.
- Children in the Pre-school care room had unrestricted access to the toilet and did not have to wait. Adults were nearby to provide reminders to wash hands after toileting.
- Younger children from the Cubs care room were observed having their nappies changed at designated times throughout the day. Staff stated children were changed at 09:30, at 11:30 before bed, after sleep, at 15:30, before going home and as the need arose ensuring the children were clean and comfortable throughout the day.
- Rest areas were provided in each care room where children could sit away from noisy activities.

Supporting children's relationships:

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Management stated that the service had recently completed a period of engagement with Better Start to drive and support the quality of the experiences the children encounter on a daily basis.
- Staff stated that a key person was assigned to each child to ensure their individual needs were met and to foster a good relationship with the parents/guardians.
- Communication books were in use for the younger children in the Cubs care room which detailed their sleeping, eating and toileting throughout the day. Staff also stated that they exchange information with parents/guardians at drop off and collection and through notes informing them of up-and-coming events.
- Staff stated informal meetings took place regularly with topics including preparation and planning of activities and discussions around the children's development and general well-being.
- Staff members who were supervising children playing in the play outdoor areas, were observed to work well as a team. They were heard, on several occasions, discussing children's individual needs throughout the day.

Physical and material environment:

- The play areas in both the indoor and outdoor spaces were clearly laid out providing children with opportunities to enhance their learning across all developmental areas. Examples included a variety of wooden structures including a boat, a post office and mud kitchens where the children were observed in imaginary and pretend play.
- Different areas and resources were available in the Cubs care room, where children were aged from 12 – 24 months, ensuring that the children's physical requirements were met. These included a balance bar, fitted at the children's level, to enable children to balance while practicing their walking skills. Mats were also in use on the floor to protect more mobile children from injury and to facilitate the children to practice and improve their emerging skills such as coordination and balance.
- A variety of physical equipment was available in the outdoor area where children were observed practicing gross motor skills of balancing, steering, riding, scooting and climbing.
- The children were observed playing in the well-resourced outdoor play areas most of the day. Covered areas provided the opportunity for the children to remain outdoors during the rain showers.
- Children had ample opportunities to move about freely and explore both in the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- Materials and resources were arranged on low level shelving in trays, baskets and boxes making them readily accessible to the children, which promoted independence.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- The equipment and materials in the outdoor play area supported the children's play movement and exploration and provided opportunities exclusive to the outdoor area including feeding the ducks and hens.

Programme of activities:

- In conversation staff from the Pre-school care room described how the curriculum had been adapted to prepare children for the impact of the move to national school. Photographs were furnished of activities which had taken place which included dressing up in the school uniform and visible photographs of the new schools that the children would be attending.
- Children's scrapbooks, which had been put together by staff, were labelled with each child's name and were available to view. Staff stated they document each child's individual interests and emergent curriculum throughout their time in the service, with staff in the Pre-school care room using the Mosaic approach
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions and singing which were observed throughout the day.
- Activities were mainly child led and children had the opportunity to express their views, take the lead and exercise choice in relation to their engagement in activities and in accessing play. Each child was offered the opportunity to take part.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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:

- The outdoor area was divided into age and stage appropriate areas facilitating younger and older children to move freely without banging into each other.
- Suitable ground surfaces including safety tiles were visible under gross motor skill equipment helping to reduce the risk of injury from a fall.
- A staff member from the Cubs care room positioned themselves at the slide in the village area to ensure the safety of the children while climbing up and sliding down the apparatus.
- Cleaning agents in all areas were noted to be kept on high shelving out of reach of the children.
- Windows were fitted with restrictors making sure children could not exit or fall from them.
- The perimeter of the outdoor areas was secured with high metal fencing and wooden gates with secure devices ensuring that unauthorised adults could not gain entry or that children could not leave the area unsupervised.

Infection Control:

- Nappy changing was carried out in line with the service's nappy changing policy. Staff were observed using single use aprons and gloves for each nappy change. A pedal operated, lidded, sealed and lined bin was in use for the disposal of used nappies. The mat and area were sanitised after use and the adults and children were observed washing their hands after nappy changing.
- Hand basins in use by adults and children were fitted with thermostatically controlled hot water, between 30.2°C and 32.8°C, dispensing hand soap and blue roll paper encased in dispensers. Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed coming in from outdoor play, before consuming food and after toileting preventing the spread of germs.
- Visual reminders with pictures and words were visible in the sanitary and changing area displaying required health practices such as handwashing.
- Windows in all care rooms were open aiding the circulation of fresh air.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

- Cleaning schedules were noted to be completed for each area and up to date, ensuring areas were kept clean and hygienic.

Administration of Medication:

- Temperature reducing medication, in its original packaging, was stored in the kitchen, out of reach of the children. The expiry date was noted as 11/27.

Safe Sleep:

- Four cots were in use in the Cubs designated sleep room for children aged from 12 – 24 months and 5 mats, over 6 centimetres, were in use for children aged 2 years of age in the Monkey care room, which was only in use as a sleep room on the day.
- The cots and mats were placed at least 50 centimetres apart, ensuring the safety of the children while sleeping.
- Physical sleep checks, for each sleeping child, were furnished which evidenced that these were recorded and carried out every 10 minutes as required. These documented the breathing, colour, position, room temperature and staff member who completed the checks for each child.
- Cots were supplied with fitted sheets keeping the area safe for sleeping children.
- The temperatures of the sleep rooms where all children were over 12 months was recorded as 21.8°C and 21.5° within the required limits of 18°C-22°C.

Fire Safety:

- Fire assembly signs were visible in the outdoor play area at the rear and at the front providing safe areas away from the care rooms in the event of an emergency.
- Fire extinguishers were secured with brackets to walls, providing quick access in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Four of the 5 adults requiring garda vetting renewal did not have garda vetting disclosures dated within the previous 3 years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice "EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting" posing a potential safety risk to the children.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

The following statement was received from the registered provider;

General Safety:

- One of the four adults has since left the service. Three garda vetting renewals have been submitted and two have been returned, we are awaiting the third renewal and will forward on when it is made available. Changes have been made with documentation to ensure, in future, that garda vetting renewals will be carried out in a timely manner to ensure compliance.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of the following documents were received in the office of the inspectorate:

General Safety:

- Two Garda vetting renewal disclosures. The statement from the registered provider has been accepted.

Summary Comment

This regulation remains non-compliant as one Garda vetting renewal remains outstanding.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that three adults had first aid responder (FAR) training completed. The staff roster evidenced that at least one adult with FAR training was available while the early years children were on the premises.
- (2) (a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box, located in the kitchen, within easy reach of the adults was available while the early years children were present in the service.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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 firefighting 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 inspector observed that written records were available of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The record of the most recent fire drill was dated 6 August 2026 with the previous month noted as 24 July 2026.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service along with the smoke alarms. Both the firefighting and smoke alarm certificates were recorded as 28 July 2026.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm records were open to review on the premises.
- (4) The notices of the visual fire drill procedures to be followed in the event of an emergency were located on the wall of the care rooms next to the fire doors.

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service was insured. Written records were furnished to the inspector which included the following details;

- The name, address and contact details of the insurance company
- The name and address of the service
- The number of children for whom the service is insured: 30
- The type of service: Full day care
- Expiry date: 27 March 2027.