

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MN012
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Name of Service:	Iontas Childcare
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Address of Service:	Iontas, Conabury, Castleblayney, Co. Monaghan
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Eircode:	A75 HK09
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ciara Trappe
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	18/06/2026
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Dates of Inspection:	19/06/2026
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No of pre-school children: Day 1	AM	53	PM	29
Day 2	AM	52	PM	-

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	No.18 The Grange Plantation Walk Monaghan
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Skinnader and M. Flood
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).

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Description of service

Iontas Childcare have been operating as a community run childcare service since 2005. They provide full day care, part-time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged from 0 - 6 years of age. The service is open from 07.50 to 18:00 each weekday and caters for a maximum of 72 children. The service has 4 care rooms in operation namely: Baby and Waddlers Room, Toddler Room and the Senior and Junior Preschool Rooms. There is 1 sleep room off the Baby / Waddlers Room. There are nappy changing and sanitary accommodations, a kitchen, office and reception area. The service has outdoor areas to the side and back of the service.

Staffing

There were 24 staff members employed in the service:

- One member of staff employed as administrator.
- One as manager who could also provide cover in the care rooms.
- Eighteen who work directly with the preschool children.
- Two who worked as cooks.
- One who worked as cleaner and provided cover in the kitchen.
- One adult employed on a community employment scheme in a supernumerary capacity in the care rooms.

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

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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.

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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on both days 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-

- (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

(1)(a) & (b) The service had a designated person in charge and named deputy person to deputise as required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived and was present throughout the inspection.

All 24 staff files were reviewed;

(2)(a) & (b) There were

- 2 written and validated references from a past employer or an alternative source available for 24 members of staff in the service.

(c) Documentary evidence of a processed Garda Vetting Disclosure was available for each of the 24 staff members. The registered provider had adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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(d) Following a review of the staff files presented for inspection documentary evidence of international police vetting was available all 5 adults who had lived outside the Irish jurisdiction for a period of 6 months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 19 staff members had a childcare qualification which met the minimum Level 5 qualification required to enable them to work directly with the preschool children.

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) During the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service in the rooms.

(2) The child: adult ratios were correct during the inspection. The following adult: child ratios were observed in the care rooms when the inspectors arrived at the premises:

Day 1:

Baby and Waddler Room:

- There were 13 preschool children (aged 1 year 3 months - to 2 years) attending this room with 4 qualified adults.

Toddler Room:

- There were 10 preschool children (aged 2 and 3 months to 2 years and 9 months) being cared for by 3 qualified adults.

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Junior Preschool Room:

- There were 14 preschool children (aged 3 - 4 years) attending this room with 3 qualified staff and 1 adult present in a supernumerary capacity.

Senior Preschool Room:

- There were 16 preschool children (aged 3 - 5 years) attending this room with 3 qualified childcare staff.

The full daycare children from the Senior Room join the Junior Preschool Room from 2.30pm.

Day 2:

Baby and Waddler Room:

- There were 13 preschool children (aged 1 year 3 months - to 2 years) attending this room with 4 qualified adults.

Toddler Room:

- There were 9 preschool children (aged 2 and 3 months to 2 years and 9 months) being cared for by 3 qualified adults.

Junior Preschool Room:

- There were 14 preschool children (aged 3 - 4 years) attending this room with 3 qualified adults and 1 adult working in a supernumerary capacity.

Senior Preschool Room:

- There were 16 preschool children (aged 3 - 5 years) attending this room with 3 qualified adults.

(8) From a review of the documentary information reviewed the registered provider ensured there were 2 adults in the service at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

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(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(h) A record of attendance was available on the electronic application in use in the service for all children attending the Baby / Waddler Room, the Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms.

(3) All records were available for inspection by the authorised officers in either hard copy or on the electronic application in use in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(h) There was no record of attendance available for 1 child attending the service on Day 1 of inspection.

(i) The staff rota present on the day of inspection was inadequate for example it did not specify the daily break times of each staff member.

(k) A sample of 15 accident / incident forms were reviewed;

- None of the forms reviewed had been signed by the manager in the service and in addition, 3 did not have a staff members signature.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Attendance, staff rota and accident/incident records have been reviewed. Staff have been reminded of the requirement to accurately record all children's attendance.
2. The staff rota has been amended to clearly record the daily break time for each staff member.
3. All staff have been reminded that accident/incident forms must be signed by the staff member completing the form and reviewed and signed management.

Management will complete daily checks of attendance records and regularly audit staff rosters to ensure individual break times are clearly documented while maintaining appropriate staffing and supervision. All accident/incident forms will be reviewed and signed by management, with regular audits undertaken to ensure all required signatures and information are recorded. Staff will receive refresher training on the relevant procedures, and ongoing compliance will be monitored through management oversight and periodic audits

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Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of roster, staff meeting agenda, fully completed incident forms.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was reviewed by the Inspectorate and accepted. The non-compliances are addressed.

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

There were 4 rooms in operation on the day of the inspection namely the Baby/Waddler Room, the Toddler Room and Junior and Senior Preschool Rooms.

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how the registered provider facilitated each child's learning and development:

Basic Needs:

- All food was provided by the service. On day 1, breakfast was toast and cereals or fruits, the hot dinner was mashed potatoes, meatballs, carrots and gravy. An option of pasta was available for those who did not want the potatoes. Meals were of an age-appropriate consistency and extra portions were offered to those who wanted more. The afternoon snack provided by the service was cheese, bread and butter, banana bread for the older children and fruit and yogurt for the younger children. On day 2 the dinner consisted of potatoes, chicken, broccoli and gravy and pasta, of which the chicken and broccoli was provided for the older children. The staff were observed to sit with the children at mealtimes, and this time was also used to encourage conversations between the children. Assistance was given to the children who required help.
- Bibs were put on the younger children before meals plus hands and faces cleaned appropriately after the meals. Hairs were fixed.
- When questioned, staff in the Baby Room confirmed that bottles of milk and powdered infant formula were sent into the service prepared by the parents and stored appropriately in the fridge.

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- The children from the Toddler Room and Preschool Rooms who did not sleep were facilitated with taking some chosen toys to play with to a room off the lobby in the Iontas building as they were not able to go outside due to heavy rainfall.
- Nappies were changed regularly and in a timely manner with pleasant interactions observed between children and staff. Any children who were toilet trained were encouraged to be independent with toileting and discreet supervision also provided by staff as required.
- Independence with toileting was promoted and supervised as required by staff members in the Senior, Junior and Toddler Rooms.
- Individual child led sleep needs were followed in the Baby /Waddler Room. After dinnertime the Toddler and Junior Preschool Rooms converted to sleep rooms to allow children have a sleep.
- At dinnertime one child in the Toddler Room displayed signs of tiredness and sleep and was facilitated by the staff to lie down and sleep on a daybed. A dinner was saved for all children who were sleeping at dinner time.
- An Individual care plan for a child who required additional supports, was in place, and the staff in the relevant care room was familiar with it.
- In general soft tones, positive and respectful language were observed in interactions between the children in all the rooms. The staff were observed to use positive supportive language for example in the Toddler Room to encourage them to complete a task e.g. song singing to get the children to help tidy up, *"gentle hands ..."*, *"that's not for climbing on, its for reading"* and *"well done!."*

Non-Compliance Information

On Day 1 in the Toddler Room transition time at hand washing and preparing for lunch became chaotic. This coincided with 1 staff member going on their lunch break also at this time. Children were observed crying, shouting, fighting over chairs and 1 child climbed onto the table as staff tried to get the children to wash their hands and get ready for lunch.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the incident, the staff member's break times were reviewed and revised to ensure that appropriate staff cover and supervision are maintained at all times. Additional room cover will be provided during the particularly busy periods and transition times.

The Room Leader and Manager will review staff break schedules daily to ensure that breaks are appropriately staggered, particularly during busy transition periods such as lunch preparation and handwashing. Staff will be reminded during team meetings and supervision that break times may be adjusted where necessary to meet the

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needs of the children and maintain safe supervision. The Manager will monitor staff deployment and break arrangements through regular observations and roster reviews, with any issues addressed immediately.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy staff rota.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was accepted and the non-compliance addressed. Review at the next inspection

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child 19 to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, a

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) Some sleep facilities were found to be inadequate as the following was observed. In the Baby/Waddler Room one child aged 1 year 10 months was observed sleeping on a thin orange floor mat that did not meet the requirement of a cot or floor bed with a mattress measuring 6-15cm for all children under 2 years of age.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Following the inspection the non-compliance was addressed immediately with the appropriate floor beds measuring 6-15cm installed.

Our Sleep Policy has been reviewed and updated to reflect the current Tusla requirements regarding sleep equipment for children under two years of age. All staff have been informed of the updated procedures and reminded that only compliant sleep equipment is to be used. Regular checks of the sleep environment will be carried out by management to ensure continued compliance and to prevent recurrence.

Supporting documentation submitted

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Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was accepted and the non-compliance addressed.

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

It was observed that the registered provider has taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service including:

Infection Control:

- Tabletops were wiped down prior to lunch, snack times and after activities.
- There was a constant supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and single use paper hand towels available to support effective hand washing throughout the service.
- Hand washing was observed in the Toddler Room and Junior Preschool Room after messy play, before lunch and after nappy changing or toileting.
- Nappy changing practices observed were good with staff adhering to best practice guidelines when changing nappies.
- Plastic covered furniture was in good condition with no damage to allow for effective cleaning.
- There were individual lidded storage boxes for the storage of the children's soothers and baskets for the children's individual bed linen in Toddler Room.

General Safety:

- The main entrance doors were secured upon the inspector's arrival. The entrance doors were controlled by a keypad lock and remained locked while not in use, ensuring no unauthorised person could enter the building or no child could leave the building unsupervised.
- Designated emergency exits were clear and unobstructed.

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Non-Compliance Information

The Inspectorate is not assured that adequate steps have been taken to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the pre-school children attending the service based on the following observations made during the inspection:

General Safety:

1. There were unprotected sharp corners
 - on the shelving units in the Junior Preschool Room
 - on the green unit in the nappy changing area
 - and on the white unit in the Toddler Room.

In addition, these were not identified on the room daily risks which had been ticked as checked and completed. This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 12/4/24. The corrective actions submitted following that inspection stated that protective corners were installed and that daily risk assessments of the furniture are undertaken daily with defects reported to the manager by the room leader. The actions outlined did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Infection Control:

2. In the Senior Pre-school Room one staff member who changed a child after a toileting accident was observed to keep their used gloves on and proceeded to have multiple touch points including the tap and bin lid with the used gloves still in place. This is a cross-contamination risk.
3. The pedal operated nappy bins in the nappy changing areas of the Baby/Waddler Room and between the Toddler and Junior Preschool Rooms did not work correctly. The staff were observed to use their hands to open the lid to dispose of the soiled nappies and staff were also observed having to push a lid closed with their hand. This is an infection control and cross contamination risk.
4. The baskets with the children's bedlinen from the Junior Preschool Room were stored in the nappy changing/ toilet area between the Junior Preschool Room and the Toddler Room. This is an infection control and cross contamination risk.

Safe Sleep:

5. When the Toddler Room and Junior Preschool Room converted to sleep rooms the following temperatures which exceeded the safe sleep guidance recommendation of 16 – 20 °C were observed
 - At 12.25pm the room temperature in the Toddler Room was recorded between 22.3 and 22.7 °C. One child was asleep from 12.02pm and it was also noted that the room temperature on the 12.18pm sleep check was recorded incorrectly at 18 °C.

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It is acknowledged that a staff member switched on the air conditioning at approximately 12.25pm. When rechecked at 12:45 pm the temperature had come down to 19.5° C.

- Additionally, the room temperature in the Junior Preschool Room was recorded between 21.9 and 22.2 °C when the children in this room went down to sleep.

6. From a review of the sleep log checks it was observed that sleep checks were not always being carried out at the safe sleep recommended 10-minute interval, for example 1 child who went to sleep at 1.30pm did not have a recorded sleep check done until 1.57pm.
7. One of the cots in the sleep room off the Baby/ Waddler Room had a 'foothold'. This went unnoticed by staff and was not documented on the daily risk assessment for the service. This is a safety risk.
8. It was observed that a number of sleep checks recorded on the electronic application in the service that some did not have the staff signatures recorded and another had duplicate checks recorded at the same time or within a minute or two of the original entry.

Outing:

9. The Outings Policy in use in the service was inadequate for example it only referenced children aged 4 – 10 years of age and did not reference the children under 4 years of age who are taken on an outing to another room in the Iontas building or on walks.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The identified hazards were addressed immediately by fitting protective corner guards to all exposed sharp corners. Daily risk assessments have been reviewed and strengthened to ensure all hazards are identified, recorded and rectified before children access the rooms. Staff have been reminded of their responsibility to complete and sign daily safety check's accurately, and management will carry out regular audits to ensure ongoing compliance and prevent reoccurrence.

Infection Control:

2. Staff member was reminded of the correct infection prevention and control procedure. Gloves were to be removed immediately after the task, hand hygiene completed, and the area disinfected. All staff completed a refresher on infection prevention and control and nappy changing procedures. Room leaders will supervise to monitor compliance.

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3. Faulty bins were replaced immediately to ensure hands-free disposal of waste. Pedal bins have been added to the monthly health and safety/environmental check to ensure defects are identified and addressed promptly.
4. Bedding was removed immediately and stored in a clean designated area away from toileting facilities. Storage procedures have been reviewed with staff and environmental audits will include checks to ensure bedding is stored appropriately to minimise cross-contamination risks.

Safe Sleep:

5. On identification of the elevated room temperatures, staff were instructed to take immediate action to reduce the room temperature. Air conditioning was switched on and the temperature was monitored until it reduced to within the recommended range. Staff were reminded that room temperatures must be checked and recorded accurately when children are placed down to sleep and throughout the sleep period. The incorrect temperature recorded on the sleep check was addressed with the staff member concerned. A review of the service's sleep policy and safe sleep procedures has been completed. Staff have been reminded that sleep room temperatures must be maintained within the recommended 16–20°C range and monitored regularly. Thermometers will be checked for accuracy and positioned appropriately in each sleep room. Additional thermometers have been purchased and placed at the sleep areas in the Toddler and Junior Preschool as an additional safety measure to ensure temperature is within the 16–20°C range. Staff will record the actual room temperature at the time of each required check and take immediate action if the temperature falls outside the recommended range. Management will conduct regular audits of sleep records and room temperatures to ensure ongoing compliance.
6. Staff were immediately reminded of the requirement to complete and record 10-minute sleep checks on the service electronic application (the app). The correct procedure was reviewed with all relevant staff, and management is now monitoring records daily to ensure full compliance. Staff will be reminded and trained on the requirement to complete 10-minute sleep checks and record each check accurately on “the app”. Management will conduct regular audits of sleep-check records and address any gaps immediately.
7. The cot identified as having a foot-hold was immediately removed from use pending assessment and corrective action. The issue identified was the sheets shrinking after many washes. New sheets were purchased. The cot and all other sleep equipment in the service were inspected to identify any similar hazards. The identified hazard was documented, and the daily risk assessment was updated accordingly. A full inspection of all cots and sleep equipment has been completed, with particular attention to potential

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footholds, entrapment hazards and the condition of equipment. The sleep room and sleep area safety checklist has been updated to ensure that cots and sleep equipment are checked routinely. Staff have been reminded that any defect or safety concern must be reported immediately to management and recorded on the relevant risk assessment. Management will conduct regular documented safety inspections of sleep areas and equipment.

8. The electronic sleep records were reviewed and the staff involved were reminded that each sleep check must be accurately recorded by the staff member who physically carried out the check. Staff were instructed not to duplicate, retrospectively enter or amend records in a manner that could compromise the accuracy of the child's sleep record. Any discrepancies identified will be addressed and documented appropriately. A clear procedure has been implemented for recording sleep checks on "the app". Each staff member is responsible for recording their own checks using their individual staff login/account, where applicable, and ensuring that records are entered accurately and contemporaneously. Staff have received refresher training on the correct use of the electronic sleep-check system, including the importance of accurate time recording and staff identification through "the app". Management will conduct regular audits of sleep records to identify missing signatures, duplicate entries, late entries or unusual patterns. Any concerns identified will be followed up promptly with the staff member concerned and recorded through the service's supervision and quality assurance purposes.

Outing:

9. The Outings Policy was reviewed and amended immediately to include procedures for all children attending the service, including children under 4 years of age who participate in walks within the building, on the grounds and in the local community. The policy now reflects age-appropriate supervision, risk assessments, ratios, parental consent, and safety measures for all outings. The revised Outings Policy has been communicated to all staff and discussed at a team meeting. Staff have confirmed they have read and understood the updated procedures. Policies will be included in the annual review schedule and audited regularly to ensure they remain compliant with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and guidance documents. All future policy updates will consider the needs of every age group attending the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photos of protective corner guards, updated daily risk assessment, copy of staff meeting agenda, sleep room checklist, copies of sleep checks and updated Outings Policy.

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Summary Comment

The Inspectorate have reviewed the registered provider's response and supporting documentation. All responses are accepted and the non-compliances are addressed. The sustainment of the corrective and preventative actions in relation to the non-compliances identified in relation to infection control and safe sleep will be for review at the next inspection.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) From a review of the documentary information available including staff rota and First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates available for inspection, there was not a person available with first aid training for children at all times in the service, for example on the 15th and 16th of June from 7.50am – 8.30am.

This was found to be non-compliant at the last inspection on 12/4/24. The corrective actions submitted following that inspection stated that a new employee record file be created detailing core training dates for renewal. Refresher training in FAR will be booked in advance each year. The actions outlined did not prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The staff rota has been reviewed and amended to ensure a staff member with a valid First Aid Response (FAR) certificate is on duty and immediately available to children at all times. Staff rotas will be checked weekly by management to ensure FAR cover is maintained at all times, and certificate expiry dates will be reviewed monthly to ensure refresher training is completed in advance of expiry.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of staff rota.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response was accepted and the non-compliance addressed.