

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW115				
Name of Service:	Ashvale Creche Ltd				
Address of Service:	Ashvale House, Ballynerrin Upper, Wicklow Town, Co. Wicklow				
Eircode:	A67 H978				
Name of Registered Provider:	Riona Long				
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	25/08/2026				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>28</td> <td>PM</td> <td>28</td> </tr> </table>	AM	28	PM	28
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham Dublin 8				
Inspection undertaken by:	R Phillips E Mulhern				
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

Ashvale Creche operates in a purposely adapted premises, adjacent to the Registered Provider's home, which is situated on the outskirts of Wicklow town. There are extensive outdoor areas on the premises where children have access to a variety of outdoor play environments. This service provides sessional, part-time and a full day care service to pre-school children who are currently aged twelve months to five years of age. The service also offers care to school aged children during after school hours and during school holidays. The opening hours are from 08.00 to 18.00 daily, 52 weeks per year.

Staffing

There were 21 adults employed in the service, including the registered provider who manages the service with two designated assistant managers. The service employs a full-time housekeeper, who prepares all the meals for the children attending. There were 11 early years educators working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider and managers were present and available to support the staff throughout the inspection.

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.

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The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b)(c), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (3), (4)- Management and Recruitment

11 (1)(2)(8)(a) Staffing Levels,

19(1)(b) Health, Welfare, and Development of Child,

23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child.

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 reoccurring. 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, management and 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
- (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,
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and
- (d) ensuring, insofar as is practicable, that where a person has lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months, he or she provides police vetting from the police authorities in that state.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that, without prejudice to the generality of paragraph (2) and subject to paragraphs (5) and (6), each employee working directly with children attending the service holds at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) There was a designated person in charge and two named people to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present when the inspectors arrived unannounced for the inspection. The management team remained on the premises throughout the inspection.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place. The managers and staff demonstrated an awareness of their roles and lines of authority within the service.

(2) Following discussion with the registered provider, it was confirmed that two new staff commenced employment in the service since the last inspection on 23 September 2025. Three full staff files were reviewed and met regulatory requirements as follows:

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- (a)(b) Four references had been sourced from past employers and all had a record of verification as required. Two references had been sourced from reputable sources and had records of verification.
- (c) Garda vetting had been sourced for all adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all other adults employed.
- (d) Police vetting was not required for the new employees as they had not lived outside of Ireland for six months or longer as adults.
- (3) The processes referred to in paragraph 2 above had been carried out prior to each employee commencing employment in the service as required.
- (4) A record was available evidencing that the adults working directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework or equivalent.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services were adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were 28 children being cared for by 11 adults throughout the inspection.
- (8)(a) There were more than two adults on the premises at all times on the day of the inspection.

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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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b) There was drinking water available to the children throughout the inspection. Meals were served regularly.

The children were given breakfast on arrival, a snack of fresh fruit during the morning and a hot meal at lunchtime. The person preparing the food had photos and care plans for those children who had dietary preferences or sensitivities. There was alternative food available as required. The children sat in groups for these meals and snacks. The adults sat with the children and chatted with the children in a relaxed manner. Bibs were provided for children who required them. The staff promoted the children's independence and offered help where required. The staff were observed to speak kindly to the children while attending to their care needs. The staff changed the children's nappies in the nursery room at regular intervals and as required. The older children's independence was encouraged when caring for their belongings and using the toilets.

Practices were observed to be child led.

The individual sleep needs of younger children were met, and this was observed on the day by children sleeping at various intervals.

Children were facilitated to sleep when staff observed signs of tiredness in the nursery room and Charmers room. There was a suitable rest area for children to take a break from activities in each care room and in each outdoor area.

The staff praised the children's efforts. Transitions were well managed with staff letting children know what to expect.

All the children spent time outdoors where a variety of different environments and a range of developmentally appropriate equipment were provided.

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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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider, manager of the service and staff had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance doors and outdoor area were appropriately secured preventing children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.

The toys and equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.

The kitchen and staff room were inaccessible to children.

Stairs were well lit and had handrails at adult and children's height to prevent falls.

Cleaning agents were appropriately stored in locked cupboards and on high level shelving in rooms the children didn't have access to.

The children were well supervised throughout the inspection.

Infection Control:

The children washed their hands on return from playing outside, after using the toilet and before eating, to prevent cross contamination.

Nappy changing practices were observed and carried out in a manner that reduced the risk of spreading infection.

There was thermostatically controlled warm water which didn't exceed the safe maximum temperature of 43°C., and liquid soap and face cloths and small individual use towels available in the sanitary areas and at children's level sinks in each care room.

There were signed cleaning schedules in place for the sanitary areas and staff were also observed completing cleaning schedules in an application. Staff were observed to wash the tables before and after the children ate.

Waste was managed appropriately in the service with the use of pedal operated lidded bins.

The covers on children's seating and cushion covers were removeable and washed regularly within the service.

Children's individual bed linen was also washed regularly in the service.

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Soothers were stored individually until used for sleep.

Administration of Medication:

No child received medicine during the inspection. Care plans with parent/guardian consent were available for children who may require medicine whilst attending the service. Staff and management were aware of the information in the care plan and the procedures to administer the medicine safely if required including record keeping. All medicines were stored appropriately in their original packaging in date and out of children's reach.

Safe Sleep:

The children were observed to be facilitated to sleep in cots.

Children were physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were carried out and documented every 10 minutes. The records detailed the children's position, breathing and colour were observed as well as room temperatures.

Fire Safety:

There were signs throughout the service highlighting the evacuation plans from each care room out to a number of assembly points outside. The staff detailed monthly fire drills in discussion with the inspector. Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the service to facilitate safe evacuation in case of a fire.

Outing:

The manager confirmed that the service does not take the preschool children on outings from the service.