

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DS125
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Early Steps Playgroup
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Kevin's Boys School, Kilnamanagh, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D24 A2XF
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Vivienne Dowman
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	16/01/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	21	PM	14
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R. Brien
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

Early Steps Playgroup is a sessional service which provides care to children aged 2 to 6 years. The service is registered to operate session 1 from 08:30 to 11:30 and session 2 from 11:30 to 14:30, Monday to Friday.

The service operates from a former classroom in St. Kevin's boys' school in an urban residential area of Kilnamanagh, south Dublin. Children have access to the school grounds for outdoor play and a small designated outdoor play area outside the classroom.

### Staffing

The service currently employs 4 staff and there were 4 staff working directly with the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider does not work directly in the service and was not present on the day of 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.

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

- 9(1)(a)(b),(2),(4) Management and Recruitment,
- 11(1),(3),(8)(c) Staffing Levels,
- 19(1)(a)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of Child,
- 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of Child,
- 25(1)(2) First Aid
- 26(1)(4) Fire Safety Measures

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

### Additional Information

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 16 January 2024 for non-compliance with regulation 25 as there were no staff available to the children who were trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

The registered provider submitted a response on 19 January 2024 demonstrating that two staff are registered to attend FAR training which will be completed on 27 March 2024.

### Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, 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, and*

*(2) A registered provider shall ensure that each employee, unpaid worker and contractor is suitable and competent taking into consideration the nature of the needs of children, including by-*

- (a) consideration of references from the person's past employers, if any, and in particular the most recent employer, if any,*
- (b) consideration of references from reputable sources in the case of a person who has no past employers,*
- (c) consideration of the vetting disclosure received from the National Vetting Bureau of the Garda Síochána in accordance with the Act of 2012 in respect of the person, and*

*(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 a named person to deputise as required.
- (2) The files of four adults were reviewed as part of the inspection. This included one staff member who had commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 13 May 2021. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these adults and met regulatory requirements as follows:
- (a)(b) Of the eight validated, written references that were required, two were available from a past employer and three were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for four adults.

(4) Records were available evidencing that four adults who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b) There were no references available in respect of one adult. There was no second reference available in respect of one other adult.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

References submitted for two staff members. Keep up to date with all new staff members requiring references.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance.

## 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.*

*(3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children for sessional care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were twenty-one children attending session 1 being supervised by four adults and fourteen children attending session 2 being supervised by four adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(c) Not applicable, the service is not operated single-handedly.

### 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*

*(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)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and staff reported that children bring in their lunch from home. Lunch took place at 10:40 and children were given a drink with their meal. Staff sat with children during their lunch. Children were observed engaging in conversation with their peers during their meal and staff supported children who needed assistance with their lunch.

Children were given responsibility appropriate to their age and were encouraged and supported to be independent. The inspector observed the children cleaning up after their snack and play and putting on and taking off their own coats. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and lunch time.

Staff displayed warmth and sensitivity during all interactions with the children throughout the inspection. Staff demonstrated a good awareness of the needs of each child in their care and responded to children's cues promptly. Children's choices were respected with children given the opportunity to choose their own play equipment and activities during free play.

Transitions within the service were managed well and children appeared to be familiar with the daily routine. The atmosphere in the service appeared calm and relaxed.

Staff were observed communicating with parents at collection and arrival times.

The care room was bright and was arranged to provide a range of play materials providing children with the freedom to play and explore. Materials available included small world toys, construction toys, a home corner and a rest area with books. The care rooms provided developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children. Play materials were observed to be accessible to the children on low level shelving. Low level tables and chairs were available in the care room.

A small enclosed outdoor play area was available outside the classroom with artificial grass surfacing. The children also have access to the school grounds for outdoor play. Children from session 1 accessed the school yard for outdoor play during the inspection. Children were observed engaging in energetic and imaginative play in the outdoor area.

### 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 had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

##### General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing. Staff were observed to carry out hand washing as appropriate.
- Waste was managed appropriately with the use of pedal bins.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Infection Control:

1. The handwashing practices observed were at variance with the infection control policy in place in the service. During session 1, children's hands were not washed before eating lunch.
2. Cleaning records were not maintained although cleaning of tables and floors was observed during the inspection. This non-compliance was present on the last inspection on 13 May 2021. The corrective and preventive actions stated by the registered provider failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Infection Control:

1. Ensure all children wash hands before eating. This has been related to all staff members.

2. Cleaning schedules on the information wall to be filled in daily after cleaning. This has been related to all staff members.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

#### **Infection Control:**

Written and photographic evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

#### **Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address these non-compliances. These actions will be assessed on 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.*

*(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**

(2)

(a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous location within the service.

(b) A first aid box was available to the children in the service at all times.

#### **Non-Compliance Information**

(1)

An Immediate Action Notice was issued on 16 January 2024 as a person trained in first aid was not immediately available to the children on the day of inspection. The registered provider submitted a response on 19 January 2024 demonstrating that two staff are registered to attend First Aid Responder (FAR) training which will be completed on 27 March 2024.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Two staff enrolled on FAR training.

No preventive actions submitted.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective actions submitted by the registered provider.

### Summary Comment

The corrective action as stated by the registered provider has been deemed to address this non-compliance. No preventive actions were submitted for this non-compliance. This action will be assessed on the next inspection.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of-*

- (a) any fire drill that takes place in the premises, and*
- (b) the number, type and maintenance record of fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.*

*(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) A written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 10 January 2024.
  - (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the smoke alarms on the premises was available. The maintenance records for the smoke alarms were dated 14 December 2023.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed in a conspicuous location within the service.

## Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There were no records available on the day of inspection to evidence that the maintenance for the firefighting equipment was up to date.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire certs on our wall for future inspections. Primary school in which our class room is based is issuing signed fire inspections.

### Supporting documentation submitted

Written evidence was presented to demonstrate the corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider.

## Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions as stated by the registered provider have been deemed to address this non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection.