

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS196
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Name of Service:	The Wombles Pre School Limited
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Address of Service:	Scoil Mhuire Primary School, Arlie Heights, Doddsborough, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 EY17
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Name of Registered Provider:	Gwen Hughes, Stacy Goodwin
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	01/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM	N/a
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

The Wombles Preschool is a private early years service which is located in a residential area of Lucan, South County Dublin. The early years service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme on a sessional basis to pre-school children aged 2-6years. The programme of care is facilitated through an emergent, play-based curriculum. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 12:00 each weekday. The Wombles operates from a designated classroom within the Scoil Mhuire primary school. A large outdoor play area is available on the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs five staff members, including the two registered providers. On the day of inspection all five staff members were present, three of whom were working directly with the 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/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were included in the inspection:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child

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

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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

Documentation was reviewed in full in respect of Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for one adult who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 27th April 2023. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all five adults employed. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (a) (b)
References were available from two sources for the adult.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the five adults employed.
The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Not applicable.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had been completed prior to the adult commencing employment in the service.
- (4) There was evidence to show that the adult had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for Qualifications.

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 pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were twenty pre-school children attending the service being supervised by three adults during the 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

Compliance Information

Staff stated the service has a healthy eating policy in place which is shared with parents at the beginning of the school term. Children took their lunches in from home and mealtime was observed to be calm and relaxed, with staff sitting with the children chatting and interacting throughout.

The routine and play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led, and children were visibly calm, content, and engaged in their play throughout the inspection. The adults were observed to have a supportive role in the children's learning and play, and children were invited to participate in organised activities as they pleased.

The adults were observed to offer consistent praise and encouragement towards the children using soft tones and gentle language. Children's behaviour was managed in a positive and calm manner by staff who were observed to use explanations and encouragement to resolve conflicts.

Practices observed by the inspector evidenced that the registered providers and staff members working in the service were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting the children's wellbeing, health and development in the service.

Staff working in the service stated they availed of opportunities to communicate with parents and guardians at brief periods during drop off and collection times. Staff stated an online messaging application is also used to communicate information on activities, news, and pictures of the children in the service throughout the week. The care room was arranged into various defined areas of interest which were well resourced, providing the children with the freedom to play and explore. Designated areas of interest included a home corner, construction area, a library and a rest area. The variety of materials and equipment offered a range of valuable and developmentally appropriate play experiences for the children. Play materials were all observed to be easily accessible to the children at all times on low level shelving units. Low level tables and chairs were provided suitable to the children's ages and stages of development.

The children had access to a large, fully enclosed outdoor play area on the grounds of the primary 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

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

General Safety:

The entrance door into the primary school was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. There were no hazards identified in the classroom.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Pedal-operated, lidded bins were in place to appropriately manage waste. Staff supported children to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of temperature reducing medication, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape route was clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.