

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2015DY334

**Name of Service:** Sophia Nurturing Centre

**Address of Service:** Sophia Housing, 25 Cork Street, Dublin 8

**Eircode:** D08 EPN5

**Name of Registered Provider:** Mary Gilton

**Service type:** Full Day, Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 22/10/2025

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	4	PM	0

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	C. Kerrigan
<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).

Conditions if applicable

Not applicable.

### Description of service

Sophia Nurturing Centre is a community operated service located on the ground floor of a residential complex in Dublin 8. The service is registered to provide a full day service from 9am to 5pm, however the service currently operates sessional care to children aged between 0-6 years between the hours of 9am to 12pm, Monday to Friday. The service provides a school aged service in the afternoons. The service is comprised of a care room and sensory room, a reception area, a kitchen, a staff room and office. A second care room is utilised by another early years' service. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is located adjacent to the care room and main entrance.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs five adults to work in the service, to include a manager, a deputy manager and three adults who are employed under community employment schemes who provide support in the care rooms in a supernumerary capacity.

### 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.

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 person in charge, the deputy person in charge the 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
  - (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.

#### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
  - (b) The registered provider ensured that the person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.
- (2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management indicated that three new staff members had commenced employment in the service in a supernumerary capacity since the last inspection in January 2024 the files of these new staff members were reviewed in full along with the Garda vetting records of two adults whose Garda vetting records required renewal.
- (a) The registered provider ensured that four written and validated references were available from a previous employer for the adults working within the service.
  - (b) The registered provider ensured that two written and validated references were available from a person other than a previous employer for the adults working within the service.

- (c) The registered provider ensured that Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the five adults working within the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) The registered provider ensured that police vetting was available for two adults who had resided in a state other than the state of Ireland for a period longer than six consecutive months.
- (3) The registered provider ensured that references and Garda vetting procedures were completed prior to any adult being allowed access or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

### 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)-*
- (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 there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children during the inspection, as there were four adults available to work with four early years children.
- (3) On the day of inspection, it was observed that the correct adult to child ratio was maintained, as there were three adults working directly with four children aged 3-4years.
- (8) (a) A review of the staff roster available, demonstrated that two adults were on the premises during the operational hours of 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

(1) (a) The registered provider ensured that children's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated in the service, for example.

#### Basic Needs:

- Water was observed to be freely available to children throughout their time within the service.
- Children were provided with a breakfast and a hot meal during their time in the service. A hot meal of pasta and tomato sauce which was freshly prepared onsite was observed to be served to the children. Adults sat with children during mealtimes providing support and demonstrating positive mealtime interactions, this supports a child's social development and positive mealtime experiences.
- The children were provided with appropriate clothing and protection for the inclement weather during outdoor play, this provided comfort during the outdoor play experience.
- Nappy changing was observed on the day of inspection; this was observed to be a dignified and respectful process. Children who were toilet trained were observed to have free access to the toilet with adults providing support when needed.
- There was a rest area in the care room if the children needed to engage in more restful activities.

#### Supporting Relationships

- The adults in the service were observed to interact with the children in a warm, attentive and affectionate manner, sitting with children involving themselves in the children's play experiences. This provides opportunities to support children's learning and emotional development.
- The adults in the service were observed to speak to each other in a professional and respectful manner.
- The service operates an open-door policy with parents, with pick up and drop offs being utilised to share information about the child's day, this is further supported through the use of individual learning journals which bridges the gap between home and a child's day.

## Physical and Material Environment

- The furniture provided in the room was low level and appropriate for the children attending with toys, equipment and play materials easily accessible and visible to the children on low level units which nurtured independent and facilitated choice.
- There was a range of equipment available including a home corner with associated props to facilitate imaginative play experience, costumes, stacking, building, connecting and threading toys to facilitate creative play. Cars, garages and trucks for transporting and books to facilitate language and early literacy development.
- The children had access to the outdoor play environment which was an extension of the care room. Children were observed to move freely between the indoor and outdoor spaces. The outdoor space had absorbent flooring. An assortment of equipment to include a covered seating area, a slide, see saws, tricycles, a mud kitchen to give an array of options to develop gross motor skills. Sensory water tables provide an alternative for children who chose more restful activities.

## 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 main entrance to the service was secured upon the inspectors unannounced arrival at the service. Access was granted via a doorbell system in which a staff member answered. Therefore, preventing access to the children from unauthorised persons.
- The care room door remained closed with a high handled door and lock system in place, therefore preventing children from exiting the service into the adjoining corridors unsupervised.
- Hazardous materials such as cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- There were no trailing flexes accessible to children within the service.
- The outdoor area was fully secured with high walls and fencing. This was accessed via the care room.

### Infection Control:

- The service was clean and well maintained throughout. Cleaning schedules were on display throughout the service outlining the frequency of cleaning.
- Thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were in use throughout the service for hand washing purposes, ensuring good hand washing practices.

### Administration of Medication:

- Medication is not routinely given to children within the service however staff demonstrated knowledge on the procedure for medication administration if required.
- Temperature reducing medication was safely stored within the service and available for use if required.

### Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were observed to be clearly lit and unobstructed during the 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

(1) Persons trained in first aid to include First Aid Response (FAR) were available to children during the operational hours of the service.

- (2)
- (a) A first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and in a conspicuous position within the premises.
  - (b) The first aid box was readily available to the adults caring for the children attending the pre-school service.

### 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 registered provider ensured that a record was kept in writing of fire drills within the service. The last recorded fire drill was dated the 10 October 2025.
  - (b) The registered provider ensured that a record was available indicating the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment with records demonstrating it was last serviced on the October 2025, and the number type and maintenance of the mains powered smoke alarms throughout the service, these were last serviced on the 15 January 2025.
- (2)
- (c) The registered provider ensured that the fire drill and maintenance records were available for review by the Inspector.
- (4) A notice of procedures was clearly displayed throughout the service indicating the procedure to be followed in the event of a

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the premises is insured to include 21 children who can attend this sessional service with an expiry date of the 15 July 2026.