

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DY369			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Saoirse Waldorf School T/A Dublin Steiner School			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	92 Meath St, Dublin 8, Co. Dublin			
<b>Eircode:</b>	D08 YN15			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jayne Enright			
<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day			
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	24/05/2023			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	24
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate 2 <sup>nd</sup> Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15   D15 CF9K			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	T. Nelson			
<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

The Dublin Steiner School is located on the ground floor of a building which has been adapted to facilitate the pre-school service; a school aged service is accommodated upstairs. The service is situated in an urban area on the south side of Dublin City. The pre-school service consists of a reception hallway, two pre-school care rooms with kitchens off both rooms and sanitary facilities. The service presently offers part-time and fulltime education and care to children from 3 to 6 years from 9am to 5pm Monday to Friday and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education programme which is delivered from 9.00am to 12.00 noon. The service caters for 32 children at any one time. The outdoor area is located to the rear of the premises.

### Staffing

There are six staff employed by the registered provider, including the deputy person in charge who manages the administration of the service, four childcare staff and an additional staff member who provides cover where needed across the rooms. There were seven adults present on the day of the inspection, including the deputy person in charge, four childcare staff, an additional staff member and a student. The registered provider was not present on the day of the inspection and does not work directly with the children but manages the oversight of the service.

### 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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4); 11(1)(2)(8)(9); 19(1)(a), 22, 23, 25 and 26. However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 29. 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.

## Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the deputy 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
- (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.

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of eight adults were reviewed, including the registered provider, six staff and a student. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(2)

(a) Ten validated references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Four validated references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the eight adults.

(d) Seven adults who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

(4) The five staff who worked directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

## Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) The registered provider did not validate two written references which were available from a previous employer for two adults.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective action: The two the two references were verified by the registered provider.

Preventive action: the service will verify all staff references before employment

### Supporting documentation submitted

Evidence of reference verification.

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed.

### 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,*

*(9) In assessing compliance with the adult: child ratios specified in Schedule 6, unpaid workers and, where applicable, the person referred to in Regulation 24(2), shall not be taken into account.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were 4 adults working with 24 children in the morning, and 4 adults working with 24 children in the afternoon. There was an additional staff member available to provide cover for breaks and where needed.
- (2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times. The adult child ratios during the morning session were maintained as follows;
- Front Kindergarten Room - 2 adult to 12 children aged between 3 to 6 years.
  - Back Kindergarten Room - 2 adults to 12 children aged between 3 to 6 years.
- (8) (a) There was documentary evidence available that there was a minimum of two adults on the premises throughout the inspection and on the premises during the services operational hours.
- (9) A student who was present on the day of the inspection was not included in the adult: child ratios of the room.

### 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

#### Compliance Information

##### (1)(a) Basic Needs:

- The children were observed to enjoy mealtime as a leisurely sociable occasion. The table was set for lunch with fresh flowers and candles, and children helped themselves to food from serving bowls. Staff supervised and sat at the table and ate with the children.
- Staff were observed to encourage the children to be independent in managing their personal care such as handwashing and cleaning their faces, and care of their environment through tidy up routines. Children were given tickets detailing tasks such as sweeping or putting away materials. This promoted independence, responsibility and achievement.
- Children's behaviour was supported through positive strategies such as clear description of expected boundaries 'I cannot let you do this'; routine which facilitated predictability and comfort, facilitating children's choice, timely intervention and modelling appropriate behaviour.
- The children had freedom to move throughout their room and choose activities and play tasks and all children were observed to have access to outdoor play for an extended period of time. Staff discussed how this access is on a daily basis regardless of the weather and the parents provided appropriate clothing for this.

##### Supporting relationships:

- Respectful and positive interactions were observed between adults and children. The atmosphere in the service was relaxed and child centred.
- Staff were observed to be interested in the children and their play and allowed children to be leaders and decision makers in their play choices.
- Relationships with parents were facilitated through the exchange of information such as the child's diet, mood and other relevant information at drop-off and collection and via email.

### Physical and Material Environment:

- The rooms were bright inviting spaces, with drapes of material placed to provide enclosed spaces for children to engage in imaginative small world play, and open spaces for children to engage in physical play.
- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and appropriate for the children attending. The environment was warm and inviting with play materials laid out in pleasing displays, stored in wicker and seagrass baskets which were easily accessible and visible to the children. Vases of flowers were displayed throughout the rooms. This provided a real-life, meaningful learning environment for children.
- Defined, inviting areas of interest were available across the rooms. Equipment and play experiences available to the children included: well-resourced home corner with real life accessories, small world play, stacking and sorting equipment, jigsaws, construction area, transporting toys, and sensory materials. The equipment provided was natural open-ended loose parts, promoting curiosity and allowing children to design a range of meaningful play experiences including creative play, games with rules, language play, sensory play, physical play and pretend play.
- There were rest areas available in each of the care rooms, where children could take a break from activities.
- The outdoor play environment to the rear of the premises was fully enclosed and surfaced in bark. The area was sectioned into defined interest areas including water play, planting, construction and digging. These areas had a range of natural, meaningful open-ended props to extend outdoor experiences. There was a sheltered area to the rear of the outdoor space, and a broad range of trees and plants. This equipment and materials facilitated children to engage in adventurous play experiences under the supervision of staff members.

### Programme of Activities:

- Play was the primary mode of learning of learning, where children were active decision makers in their choice of activity. In the outdoor area, five children were observed to be engrossed in a construction activity, using tyres and planks. They were given the time and space to use problem solving skills and physical skills such as balance, lifting and placing to build their 'storage tank', while staff observed.
- Staff were observed to use strategies such as careful positioning of equipment, preparing activities in advance, description, observation and modelling to support children in their learning experiences. Children were observed to model the staff caring for the environment, through sweeping paths and watering plants.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The service followed a varied menu plan which was shared with parents via email. Food provided within the service was prepared in the onsite kitchen.
- On the day of the inspection the children were served a mid-morning snack of oranges and pears with cracker's, a hot lunch of millet and vegetable stew containing tomato, onion, carrot and sweet potato, and an afternoon snack of fruit, cheese and hummus.
- Alternatives meals were offered to those children who required them; the children were observed to have adequate portion sizes with additional helpings available if requested.
- Fresh drinking water was available to the children throughout the day.

### 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 service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor and outdoor environment, equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents and hazardous equipment.
- There was a gate in the doorway restricting access to the kitchens off both rooms.
- Staff were observed to record the details of a minor incident involving a child in the accident and incident book.
- Radiator covers were in place on the radiators in the care rooms.
- Natural materials used in play were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children.

##### Infection Control:

- Liquid soap, paper towels and thermostatically controlled hot water was available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.

- Children were observed to handwash after outdoor play and before meals.
- The rooms appeared clean and hygienic and there was documentary evidence of a cleaning programme in place.

### Safe Sleep:

- Although no children slept on the day of the inspection, there was documentary evidence available that sleep checks were maintained for children who slept, recording their colour, breathing, position and the temperature of the room.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. The cord from the lamp on the radiator in the Back Kindergarten Room was unsecured and within reach of the children. This posed an injury risk.

#### Infection Control:

2. There was an increased potential for cross contamination as an unlidded box containing paintbrushes and jars was observed to be stored in the sanitary accommodation off the Front Kindergarten Room. Only items for use in the sanitary accommodation area should be stored there.
3. The radiator in the toilet in the Back Kindergarten Room was rusted and the paint was chipped. This provided an ineffective surface for cleaning which can increase the potential for infection.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. Corrective action: The lamp with the cord has since been removed.  
Preventative action: The service will ensure that all objects are secured safely or are not within reach of children.

#### Infection Control:

2. Corrective action: Paintbrushes were since removed from the sanitary accommodation.  
Preventative action: Only items for use in the sanitary accommodation area will be stored there.
3. Corrective action: the rusted cover on the radiator was replaced.  
Preventative action: the service will ensure all surfaces are clean and rust free.

## Supporting documentation submitted

### General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence.

### Infection Control:

2. Photographic evidence.
3. Photographic evidence

## Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been addressed.

## 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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school.

(2)(a) and (b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were available and were safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

### 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 record of fire drills was available on the premises
  - (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. Both the smoke alarm system and the fire-fighting equipment were serviced on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.
- (4) A procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was on display in each of the care rooms

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

#### Compliance Information

- (a) On visual inspection, the building appeared to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The building appeared to be safe and secure, for example:
  - Entry and exit was managed and monitored by staff preventing unauthorised persons from entering or children exiting unsupervised.
  - Emergency exits were clear.

#### Non-Compliance Information

(c) The registered provider did not ensure there was adequate ventilation in both of the sanitary facilities located off the Back Kindergarten Room. There were no windows, and the mechanical ventilation was not functioning in the sanitary facilities. There was a malodour present.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The service has sourced a contractor who will install ventilation/air purifiers to the bathrooms.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence submitted.

#### Summary Comment

There registered provider did not provide any evidence that this corrective action has been completed. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 29(c) remains outstanding until this work is completed.