

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL114		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Little Sprouts Preschool		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Balscadden Community Centre, Balscadden, Co. Dublin		
<b>Eircode:</b>	K32 P271		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lisa Prout		
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23/10/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	17	PM N/A
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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		

### Description of service

Little Sprouts Preschool is a sessional early years' service which was taken over by the current registered provider in 2023. The service provides sessional preschool care & education to children aged 2 years to 6 years participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12pm Monday to Friday. The service has exclusive use of a community centre in the village of Balscadden, north Co Dublin for the operational hours of the early years' service.

### Staffing

The registered provider works directly with the children attending the service as well as 3 additional staff members. One staff member is employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio, and when necessary, to work with children with additional needs, in a post funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme.

### 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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child safety premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – Record of pre-school 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 provider, 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.

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and a named staff member was appointed to deputise when required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at the service and was present for the duration of the inspection.

All staff files were reviewed. A total of 4 files were maintained in respect of the registered provider and 3 staff members in the service.

(2)(a)(b) Two written references were available for the registered provider and two validated written references were available for 3 staff members employed in the service.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and for the 2 staff members. Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The Garda vetting records reviewed demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as a review of the staff members curriculum vitae indicated that no staff member had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Four staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with children in the service each held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The registered provider and 2 staff members were working directly with 17 pre-school children present in the service aged 2 years 8 months to 4 years 4 months attending on a sessional basis.

### Part IV – Information and Records

#### Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

*(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:*

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

*(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-*

- (c) an authorised person.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children's records. All of the 8 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

(3) The children's records were available and open for review by the inspector as an authorised person.

## 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 following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

#### Basic needs:

- When the Early year's inspector arrived in the service, the children were engaged in meaningful play-based activities. The 3 early years practitioners present joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the adults were responsive to children's ideas and requests.
- The children brought their own morning snack with them to the service with the snacks provided observed to be in line with the services healthy eating policy. A system was in place whereby 2 children were chosen to distribute the snacks and water bottles on a daily basis, a responsibility that the children were observed to enjoy. One of the early year's practitioners sat at each of the 3 tables chatting to the children, with the interactions observed to be informative, educational and fun. The children's water bottles were placed on a low table to enable them to take a drink throughout the session as they desired.
- The sanitary accommodation was located directly off the care room which facilitated the children to use the bathroom independently as needed. Discreet supervision and assistance were provided as needed with children gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards.
- The early year practitioners supported the children's development of social skills by guiding them in times of minor conflict to listen to each other and to think of solutions together. Appropriate language and tone of voice was used by the adults during these interactions.

### Supporting relationships around children:

- The children appeared to feel safe and comfortable in the service and with their peers. The practitioners demonstrated skilful interaction strategies to support the children's play, learning and development, as evidenced in occasions when the adults acted as a play partners with the children and supported the children's participation in their chosen activities. The practitioners were heard chatting to the children about their parents, siblings, pets and extended families, this practice nurtures links between the service and home.
- The practitioners modelled positive interactions and relationships to the children when talking and working together.
- Transitions were well supported in the service. Throughout the session verbal strategies including tidy-up-themed songs were used by the adults to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.
- Partnership with parents was demonstrated during the inspection, parents were greeted warmly and communicated with in an unhurried manner on their arrival to the service.

### Physical and material environment:

- In the care room resources were easily available and accessible on low level shelving. The children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- The care room was resourced with a range of materials including arts and crafts materials, transport toys imaginary play materials including a wide range of dress up resources, bags and accessories in addition to dolls with dolls clothing, small world resources, jigsaws and a reading area. The service has access to a storage area and the play resources are rotated on a regular basis based on the children's interests. The Halloween theme was evident in the service with the children's Halloween themed artwork displayed and the children were enthusiastically involved in a pumpkin carving activity.
- An enclosed outdoor area was located to the front of the service. The area was surfaced with grass and the children had rainwear and boots available to enable them to play outside regardless of the weather. A play kitchen and hula hoops were provided along with play telephones on a buddy bench beneath a tree which the children were observed to enjoy playing with. A fairy garden was available beneath another tree for the children to use. The area provided space for the children to enjoy running and free movement. All of the children present enjoyed time outside on the day of inspection.

## 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 premises and outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- There was running warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels provided for hand hygiene at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service. The children were encouraged to wash their hands before eating and after using the toilet, with assistance provided when necessary.
- Children's lunches which contained perishable food items including meat and dairy products, provided by parents for the morning snack, were refrigerated on arrival to the service. This reduced the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food contamination.
- The premises and the play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.

##### Administration of Medication:

- There were forms available to record the details of any medication administered to a child in the service, should the need arise. No child required medication to be administered on the day of inspection.

##### Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits in the service were clear and unobstructed.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

*(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.*

*(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-*

*(a) no person other than-*

*(i) pre-school child attending the service,*

*(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,*

*(iii) an employee, or*

*(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and*

*(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The service maintained accurate details of the children's attendance during the inspection. The attendance records were accurately maintained to reflect the children in attendance.

(3)(a)(b) A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children and their parents or guardians employees, approved students or authorised visitors could enter the service. A visitor's book was maintained, and the inspector was requested to record their attendance and the purpose of their visit.

### 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) A staff member who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was available to the children attending the service.
- (2)(a)(b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and easily accessible to the staff and available at all times for the children attending the 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 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 was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service. The most recent fire drill recorded as having taken place on 30/09/2024.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were certified as having been serviced in on 10/01/24 and the smoke alarms were serviced on the 19/09/24.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises.