

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2017MH508
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Name of Service:	Little Robins
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Address of Service:	Balbradagh, Robinstown, Navan, Co. Meath
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Name of Registered Provider:	Orla Reilly
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Service type:	Full Day
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Date(s) of Inspection:	20/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	44	PM	28
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney
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

Little Robins is a childcare facility in operation since 2017. The service is privately run, located in Robinstown Village, Co. Meath. The service provides full day, part time and sessional education and care to pre-school children aged 2 years to 6 years and school aged. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and operates from 07:00am to 18:00 hrs Monday to Friday and caters for a maximum of 50 children. A school aged service is also provided.

Staffing

There were eight adults present on the day of inspection including the manager. There are fifteen staff employed in the service including the registered provider, one manager, one deputy manager, two cook's, two school aged staff members and a staff member on extended leave. There were 12 staff members present on the day of inspection of which 9 staff provided direct care to pre-school 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 and safety. Inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection included both pre-school rooms in operation on the day of inspection, Green and Yellow Pre-school Rooms.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulation 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 15 Record of Pre-School Child, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 Checking In and Out and Record of Attendance, Regulation 25 First Aid, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 28 Insurance. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) 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 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
- (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 registered provider was the person-in-charge when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service.

The registered provider has two named persons who can deputise when required.

(b) Staff rosters and staff sign in records were available for inspection and indicated that the person-in-charge and/or the named persons who can deputise are on the premises during the hours of operation of the service.

(c) Staff members were aware of the management structure in the service, the lines of authority and accountability and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(2) Fifteen staff files were reviewed.

(a) Twenty-three written past employer references were available and validated.

(b) In the absence of past employer references, seven references from a source other than an employer were available and validated.

(c) All staff files reviewed had the required garda vetting documents available for inspection and within three years of issue as per the Regulatory notice.

(d) Not applicable as staff members had not lived outside the state for more than 6 months.

(4) Seven staff members providing direct care to pre-school children had documentation to show that they held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Qualifications Framework 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.

(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) There was an adequate number of adults working with the children at all times.

(2) The adult to child ratio was correct, eight staff members were present who cared directly for 44 children, of which 28 children attended for full day care.

- The **Green Room**: Two adults cared for 11 children aged 2 to 3 years 2 months of which, 8 children attended for full day care.
- The **Yellow Room**: Two adults and one adult employed under Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) cared for 15 children aged 3 to 5 years, of which, of which 14 children attended for full day care.
- The **Blue Room**: Two adults and one adult employed under Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) cared for 18 children aged 3 to 6 years, of which, six children attended for full day care.

((8) There were at least two adults on the premises at all times confirmed by the staff roster and staff attendance records.

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-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) The records in relation to the 17 children attending the service were available for inspection and were found to meet the requirements of this regulation.

(3) (a)(b)&(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available as specified by Regulation 16 (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i)(j)(k) in relation to the service.

(3) Records were open to inspection by 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

(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.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

BASIC NEEDS

- The children's basic care needs were met on the day of inspection. The service promoted healthy eating, food and snacks were provided at regular intervals during the day. Children were served apple and crackers for morning snack time. Freshly prepared food is prepared on a daily basis in the service, dinner consisted of chicken/ vegetables and potatoes. Children's drinks were available within their reach throughout the session, should they feel thirsty at any stage. Children had their own labelled bottles of water and children were encouraged to drink water at mealtimes.
- In the Yellow Room children were divided into smaller groups at dinner time. Older children in this room were brought to the dining room for dinner which supported a change in environment and socialisation. The younger children which remained had small group time with the staff member in the room. The staff members sat at the table and engaged in social conversation with the children, promoting a relaxed atmosphere and assisted the younger children who required some encouragement and support during mealtimes.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS:

- The staff demonstrated care and attention to the children, younger children were immediately comforted when upset. The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours. Children were encouraged to share and talk to each other nicely. Staff were sensitive to individual needs of children such as children who required quiet time or individual one to one attention.

- The staff members used age-appropriate soft tones, addressed each child individually and spoke at their level. The staff members were kind, warm tones were noted as staff spoke to children. The children were observed playing in small groups/alone and were supported with their play choices such as, they had the choice to engage with group activities or not.
- Staff spoke about how they work in partnership with parents within the service. The service used an App to provide information to parents in relation to updates on eating, nappy changes, activities, sleep, and sleep checks. Staff were observed to chat at the door with parents at collection time.
- In each room there was a family and birthday wall on display promoting a sense of identity and belonging for the children attending the service.

(3) On the day of inspection, children were treated respectfully and no practices that are degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful were carried out in respect of a pre-school child.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

- (1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-
- (a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Compliance Information

(1) There were adequate and suitable facilities for children to play indoors. A variety of textures and materials were available to support the children's choice of play. There was a rest area for the children to avail of quiet or rest time in each room and six low beds were availed of on the day of inspection during sleep time.

(3) A large secure outdoor play area was available, which was divided into three sections with a variety of play materials such as activity centres, ride on tractors and cars to support the age and development of the children attending.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- There was adequate furniture and play equipment available for the children on the day of inspection with designated interest areas available in each room. Better Start has commenced a quality development programme in conjunction with the staff members.
- There were opportunities for risky play for the older children with the bottom garden equipped with climbing wall and rope climbing. This is a large garden giving opportunities for climbing small hills, chasing games and running around all which support children's gross motor skills and social skills.
- The Green Room contained play material such as construction toys, play kitchen with support material, activity /manipulation toys and dress up clothes.
- The Yellow and Blue Rooms had a range of play-based materials and that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity and spontaneous play.
- A range of books were available in the cozy reading area which supported children's language and development.
- The outdoor play area provided an alternative change of environment for the children. This includes a wooden bus, slides, a tepee tent, transport vehicles and a large sand pit equipped with digging equipment and small tractors.

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 entrance door leading into the premises were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secured.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children and the door remained closed throughout the inspection.
- Children who were brought to the dining room were supervised at all times.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were provided to support effective hand hygiene in the sanitary accommodation in the service.
- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after nappy changing.

Administration of Medication:

- The medication administration records viewed by the inspector demonstrated that the administration of medication in the service was carried out correctly in line with safe practice. The records included signed parental consent prior to the administration and following the administration of medication.

Safe Sleep:

- Sleep observations were carried out and documented at 10 minutes intervals, noting each child's position, colour and breathing pattern.
- Low beds were in good state of repair. A system was in place to manage sheets and blankets.
- Adequate space was left between the low beds positioned in the sleep area off the Green Room.
- Children placed to sleep on low beds were continuously monitored, a staff member remained in the room during the designated sleep time.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

- (1) A large protruding nail was noted in the steering wheel in the wooden bus in the outdoor area which posed a safety hazard.
- (2) Children less than 3 years of age were noted on a high climbing frame that was not age appropriate which posed a safety hazard.

Corrective Action:

1. During the inspection a protruding nail was noted on the steering wheel of the outdoor truck. This was tightened on the day of inspection and inspector was sent photographic evidence.

Preventative Action

1. The protruding nail will remain tightened going forward.

Corrective Action:

2. As a number of the children in the green room are aged 3 and are permitted to climb the climbing frame a risk assessment will be carried out prior to allowing the children to climb to ensure they are capable.

Preventative Action:

- 2 Children below 3 years of age, that are not capable of climbing the frame will be provided with alternative age-appropriate climbing equipment instead.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted of non-protruding nail on steering wheel of wooden truck.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has been accepted as the non-compliances relating to the safety of the children have been addressed satisfactorily. Photographic evidence submitted was reviewed. Regulation 23 has met regulatory compliance.

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

(3)(a) and (b)

- A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children’s parents/ guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor’s book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their attendance as the inspectors were requested to enter their time of arrival and departure.

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 registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff members were trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) certification was available for request.
- (2) (a)(b) The first aid box was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and is available to the children attending the pre-school service, at all times.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

On the day of inspection children were adequately supervised at all times.

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 the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed an expiry date of 27/03/2024.