

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2018DS504
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Rays of Sunshine Pre-School
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Firhouse Community and Leisure Centre, Ballycullen Avenue, Firhouse, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D24YYOH
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Katherine McKenna
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<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	25/09/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	11	PM	11
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Mulhern
<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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	N/A
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### Description of service

Rays of Sunshine Pre-school is a privately operated part-time early years service for children aged 3-6 years who have a diagnosis of autism. It is located on the first floor of Firhouse Community and Leisure Centre. The service has use of two rooms, separate sanitary facilities and an enclosed outdoor space. The registered provider reported that the children use the centre's hall occasionally. The service accommodates a maximum of 12 children and opens Monday to Friday from 09:00 to 13:00.

### Staffing

There are currently eight staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider. All staff work 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 areas of governance, health, welfare and development of child and 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 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.*

*(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

(1)

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

(b) The person in charge and deputy were on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for the person in charge or deputy to be present at all times of opening.

(2)

(a) & (b) The inspection focused on references for six adults employed since the previous inspection dated 9 November 2022. Appropriate consideration had been given to references for five of these adults. References had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. The references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) The inspection focused on the provision of international police vetting for adults employed since the previous inspection. International police vetting was required for three adults and was available for two.

(4) Five staff held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)(a) & (b) There were no records to evidence that two references for one adult had been verified. This regulation was non-compliant on the previous inspection. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following that inspection had not been effective in preventing the recurrence.

(2)(d) The registered provider reported that one adult for whom international police vetting was required was unable to obtain it. A signed affidavit was available declaring the adult had no previous convictions. However, there were no records available to demonstrate an attempt had been made to source the vetting. This regulation was non-compliant on the previous inspection. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following that inspection had not been effective in preventing the recurrence.

(3) It was not evident that the required procedures were always taken prior to employment of staff as outlined above.

(4) There were no records to evidence that three staff held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b) This validation record has been updated and added to the employee's file. The provider will be more diligent and ensure all the files for the reference checks are completed and attached to the written reference.

(2)(d) The employee received the international police vetting and this has been translated. The provider must ensure that all over international police vetting is provided prior to employee's commencing at our service.

(3) The provider will ensure all the paper files are filled in and will have a check list at the beginning of each file to ensure this.

(4) All staff hold a minimum of a Level 7 qualification. The service specialises in additional needs, so staff have degrees such as psychology, master's in special education and postgraduate in autism studies.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

- Copy of reference verification records
- Copy of employment records checklist
- Copy of international police vetting

### Summary Comment

- (2) (a), (b), (d) & (3) The actions have been deemed to appropriately address the non-compliance.
- (4) The regulatory requirement has not been met.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were working with the children. There were 7 adults working directly with 11 children.
- (2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement for the age of children and type of service provided was always maintained.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for at least two adults to be on the premises at all times of opening.

### 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.

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated and that appropriate care practices were in place as outlined below.

#### Basic Needs

The staff demonstrated a knowledge of each child's individual stage of development and were patient, gentle and kind in all interactions. Each child had an individual development plan which included steps towards independence with personal care. Methods were in place for non-verbal children to communicate their wants and needs such as toilet use through picture cards. The staff were adept at reading and responding to the children's cues. Children using nappies had these changed at regular intervals. Staff prompted and assisted the children to wash their hands at appropriate times.

The children brought food and drinks from home and sat together with the adults to eat at 10am and 12pm. Staff described how they have a 'fun with food' programme on Mondays which introduces the children to new foods and textures. The children moved freely within the rooms and outdoor area, engaging in play and activities. Transitions between activities were well managed with staff explaining to the children what was going to happen next. The children had an opportunity to rest at 12:30 where mats were laid out and the adults guided a meditation.

#### Supporting Relationships around Children

The adults demonstrated skills in maintaining a calm and well-managed environment where each child's development was promoted. They fostered positive relationships with children by offering support through

responsive interactions, attentive listening and gentle guidance. The children appeared content in their play, interactions and activities with staff promoting emotion regulation strategies when needed.

Staff discussed working in partnership with parents and external support agencies to support children's development and wellbeing. This included holding individual meetings to set goals and discuss progress, providing training evenings and planning for school transitions. They reported using an app for regular two way communication.

### Physical and Material Environment

The rooms were bright and spacious and arranged to meet the needs of the children. A variety of materials and equipment for play and learning were accessible to children on open shelves. These included sensory materials, puzzles, small world toys and resources for fine motor development. Equipment for imaginative play included a large dolls house and a play kitchen with props. The children engaged freely with the materials with staff expanding on their learning and promoting language development through description and repetition. The children spent one-to-one time with their key person engaging in their individual therapy goals in a fun manner. This included developing hand-eye coordination and fine and gross motor skills throwing and catching small bean bags.

The children spent time in the outdoor area where they had access to ride on toys and balls to develop gross motor skills and coordination through active movement and play.

### 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:

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the children. Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised. Hazardous items including cleaning products and cables were secured out of children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire and staff members demonstrated an awareness of fire evacuation procedures.

## **Infection Control:**

Appropriate measures had been taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. The premises appeared clean and well-maintained. Daily cleaning schedules were available and completed. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing. Staff guided children to wash their hands after toileting, nappy changing and outdoor play and before eating. Children's nappies were changed in a hygienic manner to minimise the risk of spreading infection. Pedal operated bins were in place to manage waste appropriately.

## **Administration of Medication:**

The registered provider reported that no child attending receives medication routinely. Emergency auto-injectors were available for a child who had a risk of anaphylaxis. These were stored in the child's room easily accessible to the adults. A clearly documented action plan with parent consent was available to guide the administration if required. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the signs of anaphylaxis and the action plan for administration and contacting emergency services.

## **Outings:**

The registered provider reported that the children had not been taken on an outing this year. An outings policy was available. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the procedures to take to provide for the children's safety on an outing. This included obtaining parent/guardian consent and completing a risk assessment prior to the outing.

### 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 person with a recognised certificate in first aid training was available to the children throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a person with recognised training to be available to the children at all times.

(2)

(a) The service had suitably equipped first aid boxes which were stored in conspicuous positions in the children's rooms.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available for use by staff.

### 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 written record was available detailing monthly fire drills that had been carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill record was dated 9 September 2025.

(b) Records were available detailing the firefighting equipment and fire detection system in the service. The most recent dates of maintenance recorded were 23 September 2025 and 10 September 2025 consecutively.

(4) The procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in conspicuous locations throughout the service.

## 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

The children were observed to be well supervised throughout the inspection. This included when playing, engaging in activities, eating, using the sanitary facilities and transitioning between different areas of the premises.