

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020FL003
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Name of Service:	Roots and Wings Kindergarten & Afterschool
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Address of Service:	The Square, Donabate, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K36 V838
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nickola Cullen
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	23/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	22	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle
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

Roots and Wings Kindergarten & Afterschool is a part time Early years' service and is one of 4 privately owned Early Years services operated by the registered provider in Donabate, North Dublin. This service provides part time care and education to children from the ages of 3 to 6 years, from 8.30am to 1.30pm Monday to Friday. The service is also registered to provide School Age care. The service is conducted from one room located in a detached premises on the grounds of a church in Donabate, a large enclosed outdoor play area is provided to the rear and side of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider employs a manager to oversee the operation of the early years' service. A further 4 staff members are employed in the service one of whom works directly with the school aged children only. One staff member is employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model scheme. A staff member from one of the company's other services was present in the service on the day of inspection.

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/ premises and facilities. 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, 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

A total of 7 staff files were reviewed including the file maintained for the registered provider, 5 staff members and the staff member from the company's other service who was present in the service on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b) There were 2 written, validated references available for the registered provider and all staff members whose files were reviewed.

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

(d) International police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 6 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service including the registered provider held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher 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.

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

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

There were 22 pre-school children aged 2 years 11 months to 5 years being cared for by 4 staff members.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at 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 following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- There was a warm and welcoming atmosphere in the service. On the Early year's inspector arrival, the children were preparing to go outside, throughout the inspection the children were supported to engage in meaningful play-based activities in both the indoor and outdoor play environment. The Early years practitioners joined in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to the children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play.
- The children had a morning fruit snack which is supplied by the service, The children brought their own packed lunch with them from home which they ate at a time of their choosing. The children took their lunch from the fridge, were reminded to wash their hands and were observed to enjoy their lunch whilst sitting in pairs or small groups. The children were given plenty of time to enjoy their lunch with the Early year's practitioners sitting chatting to the children thus creating a relaxed and social atmosphere. The children's water bottles were freely available to them to take if thirsty throughout the session.
- The sanitary accommodation was located adjacent to the care room which promoted the children's independence in accessing and using the bathroom. The early years practitioners gently reminded the children to wash their hands afterwards as needed. A 'self-care station' was available in the care room with a low-level mirror and tissues provided to support the children in personal grooming and self-care.
- The children had access to 2 comfortable rest areas in the care room including an area with low sized couches in addition to a couch provided in the home area of the care room where the children could choose to enjoy a rest as they desired.

- The children’s achievements were positively reinforced with recognition, praise and encouragement by the Early year’s practitioners. The Early Years practitioners were observed to approach any minor disagreements that occurred between the children in a positive and calm way and supported the children to resolve any conflict that arose.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The Early years practitioners were observed to be caring, attentive and responsive to the needs of the children, practitioners spoke positively about the children and demonstrated familiarity with the children’s needs and personalities. The interactions between the adults and the children were positive and encouraging with practitioners regularly praising children for their efforts and achievements.
- The service operates a key worker system whereby staff record observations on children and use these to inform their feedback to parents and plan for the children’s learning and development in the service. The services communicate with parents via e mail in addition to issuing regular newsletters to parents and providing updates to parents on a daily basis at drop off and collection.
- The children were observed to be very comfortable in their learning environments, they were familiar with the daily routine and sought out practitioners for guidance and support as needed. The children transitioned freely between the indoor and outdoor environment as they chose.
- The practitioners were observed to engage well together, supporting each other in the care of the children.

Physical and material environment:

- The care room was bright and welcoming with play materials and equipment positioned on low level shelving to enable the children to take and return materials as they chose, and the children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to access the materials and play resources they wanted to play with. The children’s extensive artwork was displayed on the walls which supports the children’s wellbeing by feeling valued and appreciated along with a family wall positioned at the children’s eye level which enabled the children to bridge the connection between the service and home.
- The care room was spacious and enabled the children to move around freely. The room were laid out with areas of interest including a well-resourced home area with a range of kitchen accessorial equipment including tableware and cooking utensils along with a table and chairs and a large couch for the children to relax were all provided in this area.

- A cosy area with a couch and chairs was positioned alongside a ‘real life’ fireplace below a wooden mantelpiece with family photos located on the wall as well as a family album containing the children’s family photographs all of which created a home from home environment. The provision of dress up resources, jewellery, dolls, buggies and cradles further enabled the children to extend their real and imaginary play. A construction area with a variety of wooden blocks was provided, a large art easel with a variety of arts and crafts materials supported the children’s creativity. An extensive range of tabletop equipment was provided for the children to use along with a wide range of real, natural, recycled and open-ended materials to enhance the children’s play experiences and curiosity.
- Sensory play experiences were available to the children through the provision of sand in both the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- The service has a strong emphasis on outdoor play with the children afforded the opportunity to spend extended periods of time in the outdoor play area which provided a wide range of play experiences. The door between the service and the outdoor play area remained open which allowed the children choice as to which play environment, they wanted to play in. Beneath a large awning a well-resourced mud kitchen with a wide array of supportive equipment including pots, pans, cooking utensils and milk churns were located and the children’s play was enhanced through the provision of water in the ‘kitchen sink’, a wooden tee pee was also available with this section of the play area surfaced with bark, whilst the rest of the outdoor area had grass underfoot. An extensive sand pit, the ‘construction area’ with a selection of diggers and trucks were provided with a wooden bridge crossing the area which the children could walk across. Planting opportunities were available in a planting area in raised beds to the side of the area where the children planted herbs and plants some of which they were observed using in the outdoor kitchen. A fire pit area with bench seating was available in addition to a dome climber for the children to enjoy climbing. The area also provided the children with the opportunity for running and free movement. The children had suitable outdoor clothing available to them to enable them to enjoy being outside regardless of the weather. A separate outdoor area to the rear of the service was covered with bark, a mud kitchen, bench seating and a large game were provided for the children to use. This area led to a yurt which provided additional space for the children to enjoy small group time and had a cosy area with a range of books along with a pretend medical area and a variety of tabletop resources for the children to enjoy.

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 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. Visitors enter the service through a garden gate and access to the premises was facilitated by a staff member who, having sight of callers through the glass panels on the front door of the service, opened the secured door to facilitate entry.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at all the sinks throughout the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, after nappy changing and following messy play and outdoor play.
- The premises, play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Safe Sleep:

- Comfortable rest areas were provided in the care room.

Fire Safety:

- The records demonstrated that fire drills were practiced on a regular basis to familiarise both adults and children of the correct procedures to follow in the event of a fire.

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 all children in attendance during the inspection. The children were entered as present on attendance records in the care room, noting each child's arrival and departure times.

(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 visitors' book was maintained and on arrival the inspector was requested to record the attendance on the premises and the purpose of the 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) The registered provider ensured that a person trained in first aid for children was immediately available to the children attending the service at all times as evidenced in the training records and staff roster.
- (2)(a)(b) First aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in readily accessible and conspicuous positions in 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. Based on the records maintained and as reported by staff members, fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill for the whole service took place on 19/09/2024.
- (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 September 2023 and the smoke detection system was certified as being serviced on the 19/02/2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the premises

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 service was adequately insured for 27 children at any one time. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27th March 2025.