

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2022DY003				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Little Willows Preschool				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Willows Football Clubhouse, Jamestown Road, Finglas, Co. Dublin				
<b>Eircode:</b>	D11 TF61				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Rachel Runswick				
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional				
<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	28/05/2024				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>18</td> <td>PM</td> <td>Non-Applicable</td> </tr> </table>	AM	18	PM	Non-Applicable
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Griffin				
<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 Little Willows Preschool is a sessional service located in Finglas, Dublin. The service caters for children aged 2-6 years and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) from 8.45-11.45am and 12.15-3.15pm. The service is located in a shared building within Willows Football Clubhouse. The care room is located on the first floor with designated sanitary accommodation within close distance to the room for children and staff. There is a designated kitchen available which is adjoining the care room. The outdoor area is located at the side of the premises with use of an enclosed football pitch and a grass area beside the pitch.

**Staffing**

The registered provider employs four members of staff two of whom are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model. On the day of inspection, three staff members and the registered provider were present and working 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. The following regulations were reviewed:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4)-Management and Recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(3)-Staffing Levels.

Regulation 15 - Record of a Preschool Child.

Regulation 21-Equipment and Materials.

Regulation 23-Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of child.

Regulation 25-First Aid.

Regulation 28-Insurance.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15 and Regulation 23.

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 inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

The registered provider has one named person who can deputise when required.

(b) From discussion with staff members it showed that there is a named person in charge rostered to be present on the premises at all times.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their own role and responsibility.

(2) A review of the roster and conversation with management showed that there are currently five staff employed to work in the service including the registered provider.

(a) Six written and verified references were available from recent past employers.

- (b) Four written and verified references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all five staff members. 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 not required as no adult had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the registered provider and four adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

### 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(3) There were four adults present and working directly with eighteen children aged 2-6 years attending on a sessional basis.

### 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

- The care room in the service was designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration. Children were observed to take part in circle time, free play, and group work. The layout of the room facilitated these choices as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children. Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair and were grouped into themes and were labelled with photographs which promoted children’s engagement with activities.
- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care room.
- There was a large cosy area with a soft floor mat, with cushions, cuddly toys and books for rest and relaxation. The soft floor mat was surrounded by a variety of soft sensory tiles.
- The presence of Family wall displays, birthday time displays and children had their artwork on display throughout the care room, this demonstrated a sense of identity and belonging for the children.
- There was a visual daily routine timetable on display and staff members were observed to use visual timers, this supported children with transitions and helped them to predict what is happening next giving them a sense of security.
- The service is integrated with the local community, this was evidenced by a large photographic display of places the children had visited in the area, for example the local park, the local fire station, swimming pool and shops within the community such as the barber’s and the locksmiths.
- The children were observed engaging in outdoor play in an enclosed outdoor football pitch. Supporting equipment and toys were available this included, trikes, ride on equipment, football goals and balls providing gross motor opportunities for children. Children also had access to a small, secured garden behind the football pitch and the children discussed with the inspector about the plants that they were growing.

### 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:

- Measures were in place to prevent unauthorised access and exit of children through secured entrance doors on the ground floor and first floor. The outdoor area was secured with a surrounding fence and was securely gated to prevent unauthorized access and exit of children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- All windows in the care room on the first floor had safety devices secured on them.
- All plug sockets accessible to children had socket protector covers.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach to the children.
- All radiators had protective radiator covers.
- Low-level handrails were in place on the stairs used to access and exit the care room. Staff provided the children with guidance using the stairs. One staff member remained at the front, middle and back of the group of children, and provided support as required to the children.
- The adjoining kitchen to the care room was not accessible to the children. Staff ensured that this door remained closed during the inspection.
- Staff were aware of choking hazards, including grapes. Staff discussed how they check each container at lunchtime for uncut grapes and any potential choking hazards.

##### Infection Control:

- Windows were opened to allow fresh air to circulate in the care room.
- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand drying facilities. Children and staff were observed to wash their hands throughout the inspection, including before meals and after toileting.
- Pedal bins were evident within the care rooms and sanitary area.
- Cleaning schedules were displayed in the care rooms. The equipment, materials and surrounding environment appeared clean on the day of inspection. The practices of cleaning observed were reflective of the schedules in place.

##### Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This ensured the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

### 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 as evidenced by the staff roster.

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes within the service were suitably equipped, stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and were available to the adults caring for the children 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 adequately insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for up to 22 children with an expiry date 27 March 2025.