

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024DS004
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Name of Service:	Footprints Early Years Ltd
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Address of Service:	Saint Finians Community Hall, Main Street Upper, Dublin 22, Co. Dublin.
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Eircode:	D22 Y5T7
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Name of Registered Provider:	Racheal Govan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	27/02/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Early Years Inspectorate-Tusla Child and Family Agency Loughlinstown Health Centre Loughlinstown Drive County Dublin A96P3Y6
Inspection undertaken by:	Olivia Quill and Geraldine Kavanagh
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Footprints Early Years Ltd is one of three childcare services owned and privately operated by the registered provider. The early years service is registered to provide part-time and sessional care and education to pre-school children aged 2-6 years of age and operates Monday to Friday from 9am to 1pm—with a concurrent sessional service operating from 9am to 12pm. The service is located in Saint Finian’s community building in the village of Newcastle in the south-western part of South Dublin County. Two care rooms are provided; one the ground floor and one on the first floor. There is an enclosed outdoor space to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

In total four staff are employed to work in the service including the designated person in charge. The area support manager was present for the inspection and worked 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 announced and focused on the area of governance and health, welfare and development of child. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

This inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a) - (d), (4) Management and Recruitment,

11(1) and (2) Staffing Levels,
19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the person in charge, area support manager, 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) There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present at all times during the inspection.

(2) The inspection included a review of files for five adults including the area support manager. Documentation reviewed in respect of these adults met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Ten written validated references were available from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the five adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was required and available for two adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(4) Records were available evidencing that six adults who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection. There were seventeen pre-school children attending the service being supervised by four adults.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection.
- (8)(a) The registered provider ensured at least two adults are on the premises at all times.

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

(1)(a)(b)

The service had a healthy eating policy. A snack table was provided in each care room by the service. Children had access to snacks including, ham and jam sandwiches, cheese, breadsticks and fruit. Parents provided lunch for their children. Drinking water was freely available and offered to the children with their lunch. There was a calm atmosphere in the service. At mealtime staff sat with the children and engaged in conversation. Children went to the toilet independently while being supervised closely by staff. Staff encouraged children's personal care they were supported them to wash their hands after messy play, using the toilet and prior to eating. Aprons were provided for messy play.

Child led play was observed. Throughout the morning children were engaged in a variety of activities they chose including tabletop activities and messy play with sand and water. Adults were observed communicating effectively during the inspection, they listened and spoke individually with children at their level. Staff described how they communicate with parents regarding their child's day at arrival and collection times.

Both preschool rooms were set up with low level tables and chairs and low-level shelving. Age-appropriate materials and equipment were accessible to the preschool children. These materials promoted the development of various interests including arts and crafts. Designated areas of interest included a home corner and construction area. Children had access to a cosy corner area which allowed them to take a rest from activities as required. All children spent time in the outdoor area and staff reported outdoor play is part of the daily timetable.