

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2024KE008		
Name of Service:	Tots Grey Abbey		
Address of Service:	Grey Abbey, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	R51 TX68		
Name of Registered Provider:	Annette Akerlind,Audrey Murray		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	14/04/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	35	PM 35
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate TUSLA Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	R. Flynn and F. Maher		
Titles:	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.		

Description of service

Tots Grey Abbey is one of 10 privately owned, early years' services offering full day, part time and sessional care and education to children aged 0 - 6 years old and opens Monday to Friday from 07:00am-18:30pm.

The premises operates from a new purpose-built two-story building situated within a residential estate in Kildare Town. There are five care rooms – three on the ground floor and two on the first floor. The ground floor also includes a sleep room, sanitary accommodation for staff and children and an office.

The first floor includes sanitary accommodation for staff and children, a kitchen and a staff lunchroom.

An outdoor play area is located to the rear of the building.

Staffing

There were 13 adults present on the day of inspection; this included 8 adults working directly with the children, the person in charge, the operations manager, area manager, one relief staff member and the cook.

The registered providers do not work in the service.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under
Regulation 9 - Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels

Regulation 19 - Health, Welfare and Development of Child

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under,

Regulation 21 -Equipment and Materials

The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the operations and area managers, 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.

(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) A designated person in charge was available in the service during the inspection. A deputy designated person in charge was available to deputise as required.
 - (b) Both the designated person in charge and the deputy person in charge remained onsite for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- The files of 14 staff members employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.
- (a) (b) Two validated references were available on file for each staff member from either, a past employer or a reputable source in the absence of a past employer.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available on file for all 14 members of staff working in the service.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(d) Police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived outside of the state for a period longer than six months.

(4)
Eight staff members working directly with pre-school children attending the service held 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 by the Minister.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)

One staff member who had lived and worked outside of the state for a period longer than six months did not have police vetting on file.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

This staff member has re-applied for her police clearance.

Our recruitment department follows our recruitment policy when hiring staff and follows the policy to avoid any missed steps.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documents x 2

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9(2)(d) has not been met at this time as the police clearance certificate has not been issued to date. It is acknowledged the relevant police authority has confirmed the application has been received and is currently being processed. This area of the regulation will be inspected at the time of the next inspection.

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 preschool children. There were 35 children attending the service being supervised directly by 9 staff members.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the inspection.
There were 2 adults providing direct care to 9 children aged 3-6 years in the Pre-school full day care room.
There were 3 adults providing direct care to 15 children aged from 1-2 and 2-3 years in the Cruiser room.
There was 1 adult providing direct care to 6 children aged 2-3 years in the Toddler room.
There were 2 adults providing direct care to 5 children aged 1-2 years in the Baby room.
- (8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times, this was confirmed following review of the staff roster for the week of 14 April 2025.

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic needs of children

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and all meals and snacks were provided by the service. Food was freshly prepared and cooked by an onsite cook. The main hot meal served on the day of inspection was creamy vegetarian pasta. The morning snack provided by the service included fresh fruit pieces and rice cakes. Water was freely available in each room throughout the day. Bibs were used to protect the babies clothing during mealtimes. Babies' hands and faces were cleaned with individual wash cloths following snack time and hand washing routines were well established in each care room as advised by the staff members.

Children enjoyed freedom of movement within the care rooms. The children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play in the morning and afternoon. The children were dressed appropriately for outdoor play in coats, waterproof clothing and wellingtons which were provided by parents and stored in a designated storage bin for each child.

Nappy changing procedures were carried out on a routine basis and more frequently if required. Children were observed being supervised in the Cruiser room sanitary area and with hand washing before eating their lunch.

Adequate cots and floor beds for children aged less than two years requiring sleep were available and children were accommodated to sleep according to their individual need.

Low level beds with appropriate bed linen were available for children aged 2 years and above who were observed to go to sleep after lunchtime.

Children's behaviour was managed positively with an emphasis on praise and encouragement.

Supporting relationships around children

On the day of inspection all staff members were observed to be warm, kind and respectful towards the children in their care. Children were spoken to using their first names, appropriate eye contact was made, and soft vocal tones were used during all interactions.

Babies and younger children were observed being held and cuddled by staff and any child that became upset or unsettled was immediately attended to and reassured.

Communication with parents was via a closed electronic application that enabled parents to log in and view any aspect of their child's day in real time.

Physical and material environment

Each room was equipped with spaces to play, learn and develop with age-appropriate play and learning materials to encourage each child to initiate self-directed activities.

The low-level shelving in the baby room and pre-school rooms ensured that the materials and equipment were freely available to children, enabling free choice of the equipment. There was plenty of mark making and art and craft materials including paper and crayons, paint and playdough. Other equipment included musical instruments, large blocks for building, dress up areas, dolls and prams, trucks and cars, and a variety of jigsaws and puzzles.

The Baby room was resourced with push along and pull along equipment, stacking toys and numerous soft rest and play areas.

Comfortable rest areas were available in all rooms for children to relax and take a break throughout the day as required.

The outdoor area had an artificial grass surface and was fully enclosed with a high-level concrete wall and gates to the side. Equipment included a climbing frame, balls, ride on equipment, tables and stools.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

It was observed that one child in the baby room and six of the fifteen children attending the cruiser room were sitting on chairs that were too high to allow the children to sit with their feet on the floor for balance and stability.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

We have placed some lower chairs into this classroom to make sure the children's feet touch the floor at all times. A mixture of differing height of chairs should be in storage and available for children different heights.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographs x 5

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 21 has been met.