

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2025DS004
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Dolphins Early Education and Childcare Centre
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Unit 5 Airton Plaza, Airton Road/Belgard Road, Tallaght, Dublin 24, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D24 EC2R
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Jennifer Healy
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day, Sessional
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/02/2026
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	49	PM	42
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	S. Early O'Brien & H. Bourke
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Dublin 8.
<b>Title:</b>	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).

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

Dolphins Early Education and Childcare Centre is a privately owned service, located in Tallaght, Dublin 24. The service consists of a ground floor, purpose-built premises comprising of six care rooms, a staff room, kitchen and office. Each care room has access to a large enclosed outdoor play area which is located to the left hand-side of the building. The service provides full day care and sessional care for children aged 1 to 6 years and operates for 51 weeks per year. The hours of operation are 07:30 to 18:00, Monday to Friday.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs 16 adults to work in the service. This includes the centre manager and a chef. On the day of inspection there were 17 adults present, 16 of whom were working directly with the children which included the centre manager and 1 student. The registered provider also employs an area manager who was not present on the day of inspection. The registered provider was not present and does not work in the service on a daily basis.

### 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, 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 the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(4) - Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11 (1)(2)(8)(a) - Staffing levels,

Regulation 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, 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) The centre manager is the designated person in charge of the service and there is a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The centre manager was present and in charge of the service and present in the service throughout the inspection.

(2)

Documentation was reviewed in respect of 19 adults who work in the service and met regulatory requirements as follows:

(a) Of the 38 validated, written references required, 31 references were from a previous employer.

(b) Of the 38 validated, written references required, 4 were from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were on file and had been obtained for 19 adults.

(d) Police vetting was available for nine staff members who had lived outside of the State for a period of more than six months as an adult.

(4)  
There was documentary evidence available to demonstrate that all staff members employed to work directly with the children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2)  
(a)(b) On the day of inspection, a second reference for one staff member was unavailable. A second reference for two staff members were not available from a reputable source. Twenty-three of the required 38 references had not been suitably validated.

(d) Police vetting was unavailable for one member of staff who had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or more as an adult

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2)(a)(b)  
Immediately following the inspection, the two required references were sought and verified immediately. They have been placed on the staff members files. All references available on the day of inspection where there was no evidence of validation, have now been verified and are available in the staff files.

(4)  
Police vetting for one staff member has been obtained and is now on file.  
  
To prevent a reoccurrence of non-compliance in the future, the manager has been retrained in relation to ensuring that as new staff are employed, all required documentation is sought in advance, verified as required and placed on staff members' file. This will then be checked by the deputy manager to ensure all is in order.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic evidence has been submitted for the 2 written, verified references, police vetting for 1 staff member and proof of validation for 23 references.

### Summary Comment

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform 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 children at all times during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children for full-time and sessional care was adhered to at all times during the inspection. On the morning of inspection there were 15 adults working directly with 49 children attending the service and 15 adults working directly with 42 children on the afternoon of inspection.

8(a)

There was a minimum of two adults on the premises at all times during the inspection evidenced in the staff roster available on the day of inspection.

## 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

##### Basic Needs

Healthy eating was promoted in the service and staff reported that all meals were provided by the service for children attending on a full day and sessional basis. On the day of inspection, the children were observed to be eating chicken curry with rice and vegetables for dinner. Staff advised that alternatives were available and food preferences were catered for on the day of inspection. Additional helpings were available on request by children. Drinking water was accessible to children throughout the day and all children were given water with their dinner. Children appeared happy and content within each of the care rooms.

Children's care needs were observed to be met promptly. Children's nappies were changed regularly and staff were observed engaging warmly with children when providing this care. Children were encouraged and supported to be independent in using the toilet and in cleaning up after their play and meals.

There was a designated nap time in three of the care rooms for younger children who required sleep. Stackable beds and cots were available for these children where appropriate.

##### Supporting Relationships

Children were observed being supported by the staff members as they engaged in self-directed play and activities. The atmosphere was friendly, happy and child centred. The staff members were observed responding to the children in a positive manner and provided praise and encouragement to each child on a regular basis. A family tree with pictures of the children and their families provided a connection with home in each of the care rooms and that provided the children with a sense of security and belonging. Staff explained how they shared children's learning and development with parents through an online application.

### **Physical and Material Environment**

The care rooms were constructively planned to create interesting play and learning spaces to encourage children to extend and develop their imaginative and explorative play and learning experiences. Low level tables and chairs were provided for tabletop activities and low-level open shelving ensured toys, equipment and materials were accessible to the children. Materials and equipment included paint, crayons, paper, books, dolls, dolls house, puzzles, blocks, cars, animals, sensory play, natural and open-ended materials and fine motor skill toys. Children's artwork was displayed throughout the service.

### **Programme of Activities**

Children were observed to make choices on their own play materials within the environment and demonstrated familiarity with the routine of their day.

Positive language was observed to be used across the staff team and with the children. Language development was supported in discussions observed both in play, at dinner time and sleep time. Within the routine of the day children's identity and belonging was supported with opportunities for them to be curious. Children demonstrated autonomy within their learning environment as they transitioned to activities and routines throughout the inspection.

### **Non-Compliance Information**

(1)(a)

#### **Basic Needs**

Children attending the Green Room and Blue Room were not given sufficient time to eat. While it was acknowledged that the adults sat at the tables with the children, they did not offer support with feeding. Bibs were not offered to children. The staff were observed to commence with cleaning and removing children's bowls before meals were finished.

#### **Physical and Material Environment**

The cosy areas in the Green Room and Orange room were not appropriately resourced to support children to rest and relax, in particular for children attending on a full day care basis who did not require sleep.

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

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

#### **Basic Needs**

All staff members have been addressed individually and collectively at a team meeting to reinforce appropriate mealtime procedures which have been outlined. Two staff members are now assigned to sit with children at each

mealtime to provide supervision, encouragement, and support. In addition, a designated float staff member is available during mealtimes to provide further assistance to any child requiring additional support.

### **Physical and Material Environment**

Sleep mats which were previously used in the cosy corner have been removed and new cushions and mats have been put down to create a cosy, warm and comfortable environment for the children if they want to rest at any stage during the day.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Documentary evidence of mealtime procedures discussed with the staff team.

Photographic evidence of cosy areas.

### **Summary Comment**

The inspectorate has deemed that the actions submitted adequately address the non-compliance and will inform the next inspection.