

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC069 |
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| Name of Service: | Bright Beginnings Montessori Pre-School |
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| Address of Service: | Ardfield National School, Ardfield, Clonakilty, Co. Cork |
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| Eircode: | P85 H566 |
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| Name of Registered Provider: | Carmel O'Donovan |
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| Service type: | Part Time |
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| Date of Inspection: | 11/06/2024 |
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| No of pre-school children: | AM | 21 | PM | 7 |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440 |
| Inspection undertaken by: | V. McCarthy |
| 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).

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| Conditions if applicable | N/A |
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Description of service

Bright Beginnings Montessori Preschool is a part-time service that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) and school age care. The service is a privately operated service that is carried out in a prefabricated building located on the grounds of Ardfield National School. There is a designated outdoor play area available to the front of the preschool for use by the early years children. The service is registered to cater for early years children aged between 2 and 6 years. The registered opening hours for part-time service are 9am to 2pm and for the children attending the sessional service are 9am to 12 mid-day and 12.15 to 3.15pm.

Staffing

The service is carried out by the registered provider and 4 other adults. Each adult works directly with the children, and each has a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education. An adult that was attached to a training college was also on the premises.

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 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*

(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 named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider who was the person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 10 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 6 adults attached to the service.
 - (b) There were 2 references and required validations from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for review in respect of each of the 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years in respect of each adult.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in respect of 2 adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of 5 of the 6 adults. The sixth adult was attached to a training college and in the process of completing her training.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 3 adults working directly with 21 early years children.

(8)(a) There were always at least 2 adults on the premises during the hours of operation. The roster demonstrated that 3 adults were on the premises at 9 am when the service opened and that there would be 2 adults on the premises at 2pm when the service closed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

Compliance Information

(1)
(h) A roll book with the details of daily attendance by each pre-school child was available for review. On the day of inspection there were 21 early years children in attendance at the premises and this was demonstrated by the records.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The parents provided the food for their respective child's meal and snack break.
- It was noted that all the food ate by the children was appetising and healthy and that each child had a portion of sliced fruit such as grapes or strawberries or apples as part of their snack food.
- On the day of inspection, the mid-morning snack consisted of a variety of sliced fruit, yogurts and/or sandwiches. The children that remained on the premises after 12.30 had a second food break between 1pm and 1.30pm. At this break, they ate the remainder of the food that was in their lunch boxes which included sliced fruit, crackers, sandwiches, rice cakes and drinks of water.
- The food breaks were very social occasions for the children who sat in groups around child sized tables. It was observed that the children chatted easily together and listened to each other stories as they sat and ate together.
- Crockery was available in the care room and the children were provided with plates as required.
- A low fridge was provided for the safe storage of the children's perishable food.
- The children's individual bottles of drinking water were stored on top of the low fridge and were easily accessible to the children when they wanted a drink of water.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) Records were available to demonstrate that each child was checked in and out daily at the service by the adults. The inspector assessed the records for the week commencing the 13 May 2024 and the daily records were complete regarding the arrival and leaving times for all the children. On the day of inspection there were 21 early years children on the premises and each child had been checked in on his/her arrival by the adults and were again checked and signed out as each child was collected by their respective parent/guardian.

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) There were records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service available on file. A fire drill was last carried out by the service on 13 May 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was maintained. It was recorded that the fire equipment was last serviced during December 2024 and that the wired smoke alarm was serviced on 24 July 2024.

(4) The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on a wall in the care room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The services' insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of children covered which was 30, the start date, which was 28 March 2024, the end date, which was 27 March 2025, the category of service covered which was full day care and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding, contents, public liability and fire and theft cover.