

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015DR023
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Minds Childcare and Montessori School Ltd
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	128 Balally Drive, Dundrum, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	D16 P025
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Stephanie Gratton
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<b>Service type:</b>	Full Day
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<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	05/06/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	38	PM	26
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	R. Duff S. Quigley
<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>	Not applicable
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## Description of service

Bright Minds Childcare & Montessori School is a privately owned and operated by the current registered provider since 2020. The service is located in a residential area of Dundrum, South Co. Dublin. The service is registered to provide full day, part-time and sessional care and education to children aged 0 to 6 years. The hours of operation are from Monday to Friday between 08:00 and 18:00. The premises is a two storey purposely adapted residential property. Care and education are provided across four care rooms, three of which are located in the main building and one in a separate building to the rear of the premises which children are allocated to by age range and stage of development. An enclosed outdoor play area is available to the rear of the premises.

## Staffing

The service currently employs 13 staff members, including the registered provider and a cook. On the day of inspection 12 adults were present.

## 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 (2)(3)(4)(7)-Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11(1)(3) Staffing levels

Regulation 19 (1)(b) Health, welfare and development of child.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, safety, and welfare of child.

Regulation 27-Supervision

Regulation 29-Premises.

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 registered provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

### Part III – Management and Staff

#### Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

*(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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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.*

*(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:*

*(a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;*

*(b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and*

*(c) these Regulations.*

#### Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b)

The inspection included a review of the required documentation for 4 adults employed in the service since the last inspection dated the 02 September 2024. Garda vetting disclosures were assessed for each of the 13 adults employed in the service. The following documentation was available;

The registered provider demonstrated that they had verified the references obtained from 8 previous employers for 4 of the adults.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for 13 staff members employed to work in the service. Garda vetting disclosures from all staff were assessed to determine compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d)

Police vetting was available for 3 adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months as an adult.

(4)

Records were available evidencing that 4 new staff members who were employed to work directly with the children held the required qualification or equivalent, 1 adult who did not have the required qualification was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth

(7)(a)

The registered provider could demonstrate that they had taken reasonable measures to ensure that all employees were appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, training and policies to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service.

### Non-Compliance Information

(3) Although a second written and verified reference for one adult was available, it had not been verified prior to the staff member commencing employment.

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

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

The register provider has stated that in future all references will be verified prior to a person commencing employment.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

No supporting documentation submitted.

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

### 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.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (2) During the Inspection, there were 10 adults caring for 38 children aged 1years - 5 years old. The minimum ratios of adults to children was maintained at all times during the 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-*

*(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

The inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place. The children moved freely in all rooms – exploring their environment, playing and engaging with each other and the staff. Staff demonstrated warmth and affection in their interactions with the children. They addressed children by name, used gentle tones and interacted with them in a positive manner. Language used by the staff members was observed to be encouraging, supportive and informative. Children in the Montessori room practiced songs for graduation and discussed their transition to school. Individual daily reports were kept throughout the day to give to parents/guardians to provide for continuation of care. Identity and belonging were promoted in all care rooms with children’s family photos, and artwork displayed on the walls of the care rooms and visible to children. Children spent time outdoors throughout the day and were dressed appropriate to the weather.

Children were given advance warnings to support transitions to a new activity and for mealtimes. Transitions in all rooms appeared to be well managed. Sessional children brought morning snack from home and the service provides snack additional snacks and a hot meal at lunch time for all children. Drinks were readily available within the care rooms. Mealtimes were social occasions with children and adults sitting together, staff provided children with help when needed. Younger children were supported to eat independently, and bibs were worn during meals to protect the children's clothes from becoming soiled or wet. Children wearing nappies had these changed regularly. Staff used opportunities when assisting with personal care for warm one to one interactions with the children.

Children in the baby and toddler rooms were placed to sleep as part of the room routine. The sleep rooms were calm and conducive to sleep. Children who had soothers were offered these when they were being placed to sleep. Staff provided the children with comfort and reassurance as they were settling to sleep, talking to them gently and sitting next to them. Areas were provided within all rooms where children could rest or take a break from activities.

### 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:

- When the inspectors arrived at the service, access to the main door was monitored and controlled by staff to restrict unauthorized persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. In addition, the outdoor play area was securely gated restricting unauthorized persons from gaining access to this area and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised.

##### Infection Control:

- Soothers were kept in individual containers to avoid cross-contamination.
- Appropriate infection control measures were taken during nappy changing including the use of gloves, aprons, and thorough handwashing after changes.
- Each child was provided with their own bed linen, which was laundered weekly and stored individually between use.
- Warm water, soap and paper towels were available for handwashing.

### Safe Sleep:

- Staff were familiar with safe sleep guidance. Sleep logs were maintained in the dedicated baby sleep room and the toddler room, individual children's observations recorded room temperature, breathing, colour, and position every ten minutes. Standard cots and sleep mats were available for sleep and were used in accordance with children's ages and developmental needs. The temperature of the rooms where children slept were recorded and maintained at the required temperature ranges.

### Fire Safety:

- The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. An electrical cable from the clock in machine in the sessional Montessori was hanging down in reach of children during the inspection posing a risk of injury to a child.
2. An asthma inhaler was observed to be stored in a low storage unit assessable to children in the Montessori room. This poses a potential risk to a child if they accessed it.
3. The road map mats in the sessional Montessori room and the Montessori room were curling up at the edges. This posed a risk of tripping to a child or adult in each room

#### Infection Control:

4. Perishable food items in children's lunch boxes were stored at room temperature in the Montessori and preschool rooms prior to consumption posing a risk of gastrointestinal illness.
5. Adequate space of 50cm was not maintained between cots to limit the spread of infection. Two cots in the baby sleep room were positioned 5cms apart.
6. The bins in use for disposal of waste in the toddler room and sessional Montessori room were unlidded. They both contained soiled nasal tissues and used paper hand towels. They were accessible to the children in each room posing potential a risk of cross contamination.
7. In the Montessori room, the pedals on the two pedal operated bins were broken, both bins were in use and required staff and children using their hands to open bin to dispose of waste. This posed a potential risk of cross contamination

### Administration of Medication:

8. Some of the procedures in place for the administration of medication were at variance with the policy and associated procedures in place in the service and posed a risk of harm to a child as follows;

Documentation reviewed contained no evidence to show that parents had provided pre-consent for the administration of medications to their child or evidence they had been informed that their child had received medication in the service.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### General Safety:

The registered provider has stated:

1. The electrical cable from the clock in machine in the sessional Montessori has been secured with casing and is no longer a risk to children. This will be monitored more closely in the future.
2. The asthma inhaler has been moved to the medicine cabinet out of reach of children. Staff have been reminded of the importance of storing medicine out of reach of children.
3. The 2 road map mats have been , going forward any mats that are curing at the edges and that are potential tripping hazards will be removed.

##### Infection Control:

4. A note has been sent to all parents of children in the sessional preschool to ask them to provide lunch in a zip seal bag to allow perishable lunch be stored in the fridge.
5. The cots have been moved to allow adequate space between them, new space saver cots have been ordered to give additional space in the sleep room.
6. The unlidded bin has been removed from the Montessori room. The register provider has stated that the unlidded bin was intended for recycling however had not been used for this purpose. Only bins with lids will be used in the room.
7. The 2 broken bins in the Montessori room have been replaced with 2 new bins. Broken bins will be replaced as needed.

##### Administration of Medication:

The administration of medication form has been updated to include a section where parents/ guardians can sign to acknowledge they have been informed about any medication administered by staff.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### **General Safety:**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

#### **Infection Control:**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

#### **Administration of Medication:**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

### Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met. The actions outlined will be assessed on the next inspection of the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The supervision of the children attending the service was adequate on the day of inspection. On the day of inspection 38 children were being supervised by 10 staff members.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*  
*(d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(d) Throughout the premises, areas of the building were found not to be cleaned, maintained and repaired as required as detailed below:

1. A deep gap was observed between the outside building and the ground surface. This created a large foothold that was accessible to children.

2. Throughout the garden, uneven paving slabs were observed to be loose and lifting. This created a trip hazard for children and staff.
3. In the toddler room, 2 radiator covers were loose and could be pulled down by children.
4. In the toddler nappy changing area, mould spores were observed on the walls, and the area behind the nappy changing mat was unclean and rusty.
5. The window ledge in the toddler room was loose and coming away from the wall.
6. Parts of the walls, doors, and ledges in the baby, toddler and sessional Montessori rooms were soiled and heavily chipped with paint missing in parts.
7. In the baby, toddler and sessional Montessori rooms, Plaster was missing from a number of walls exposing holes and metal rendering.
8. Part of the skirting board in the Toddler room was missing exposing chipped plaster and debris.
9. In the sessional Montessori room, the chairs were heavily stained and soiled, they required a deep clean.
10. The ramp leading from the conservatory area into the sessional Montessori room was loose and broken in parts. This posed potential tripping hazard.
11. Areas of the flooring in the sessional Montessori room and Montessori rooms were worn away exposing porous wood and creating a trip hazard.

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following the last inspection of the service on 02 September 24 did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliance under Regulation 29 on points 6, 7 and 8 above.

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

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated:

1. A new drain pipe will be placed in the deep gap in the back garden and a grate will cover it fully. A building company has been hired to carry out the work.
2. The paving slabs in the back garden will be fixed once additional building work is complete. Slabs will be monitored in the future to ensure they are secure.
3. The radiator covers have temporarily removed and will be replaced securely when the room has been painted. They will be carefully monitored and fixed if they become loose again.

4. The roof of the toddler room is being repaired to stop any leaks, the wall has been cleaned, replastered and repainted to prevent mould spores reoccurring. Regular checks will be carried out to monitor any reoccurrence of mould.
5. The window ledge has been repaired; regular checks will be carried out to monitor the window ledge.
6. The walls in the baby room have been resurfaced with panelling. The room will be replastered and repainted during the week of 14 July 2025; a contractor has been hired by the service to carry out repairs and painting.
7. The room will be replastered and repainted during the week of 14 July 2025; a contractor has been hired by the service to carry out repairs and painting.
8. The skirting board in the toddler room will be repaired when the painting is completed in the room. All rooms will be monitored for any maintenance work needed.
9. The chairs in the Montessori room have been deep cleaned. The chairs will be wiped down daily and deep cleaned monthly.
10. The ramp between the conservatory and the sessional Montessori room has been removed, it will be replaced securely when the new floor is fitted.
11. The floors in the sessional Montessori room and Montessori room will be replaced in July or august. A company has been hired to carry out this work.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector

### **Summary Comment**

The corrective and preventive actions as stated and once implemented will address the non-compliance. These actions will be assessed on the next inspection of the service. The regulatory requirement has been met.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

*(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(1) (2)

The minimum amount of clear floor space required for the number and age of the children attending the Toddler room was not available on the day of inspection as follows:

- In the Toddler room, 8 children aged 2 years were present on the day of inspection on a full day care basis requiring a minimum of 18.8 square metres clear floor space when only 16.6 square metres is available. A review of attendance records evidenced that 9 children are registered to attend the Toddler room daily. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following the last inspection of the service on 02 September 24 did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliance under Regulation 30.
- In the full day Montessori room, 15 preschool children aged 3 to 5 years were present on the day of inspection on a full day care basis requiring a minimum of 34.5 square metres clear floor space when only 27.6 square metres is available. A review of attendance records evidenced that 15 children are registered to attend the Montessori room daily.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated:

The numbers availing of the service are children who were booked in prior to the previous inspection on 02 September 2024, the numbers will be reduced in September 2027 as the capacity for intake has now been reduced. The correct numbers will be maintained from September 2027.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

No Supporting documentation has been submitted.

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report Pre School

## Summary Comment

The non-compliance remains outstanding. The regulatory requirement has not been met.