

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS113
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Name of Service:	StartBright St Finians
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Address of Service:	22 St. Finian's Green, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 PF72
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine McQuillan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	13/11/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	27	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley
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).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
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Description of service

Start Bright St Finian's is a not-for-profit early years service which is located in a residential area of Lucan, South County Dublin. The early years service offers an Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme on a sessional and part-time basis to pre-school children aged 2-6 years. The programme of care is facilitated through an emergent, play-based curriculum. The early years service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 12:35 each weekday. The service operates from a purpose-built single-story premises which consists of two classrooms, an office, a kitchen, and sanitary accommodation. Two outdoor play areas are available on the premises.

Staffing

The service currently employs nine staff members, including a staff member employed to work solely with school aged children in the afternoons, and a housekeeper. The registered provider does not work directly in the service. On the day of inspection nine adults were present, including two adults on a work placement programme, the person in charge, and the housekeeper.

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/ information and records. 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 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

(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.

Compliance Information

Documentation was reviewed in full in respect of Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for three adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 24 April 2023. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all adults working in the service. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (a) (b)
 - References which had been appropriately verified were available from two sources for one of the adults.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the eleven adults working in the service. However, the service did not demonstrate compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years, as detailed in Regulation 23.
 - (d) Not applicable, the adults did not require international police vetting.
- (4) Not applicable, the adults did not require a recognised qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) There were no appropriately validated references available for two of the adults.
- (3)
- Documentation reviewed evidence that the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b) had not been carried out prior to two of the adults commencing work in the service, as detailed above.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2)(a)(b)(3)

The service now has two references in the files of the two staff. The manager will check and sign off on all information required in each person's file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 27 children present in the service being supervised by 6 adults during the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*

(f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;

(g) the name and telephone number of the child's registered medical practitioner;

(h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;

(i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)

Records were reviewed for 12 children attending the service by the inspector. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to (a) to (i) of the above Regulation for each of the 12 records reviewed.

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

Compliance Information

The inspector observed that the children's learning, development and well-being was supported by the staff and the environment. The routine in place afforded the children the opportunity to engage in child-led play. The children moved freely in both care rooms between the indoor and outdoor play environments. Equipment was available outdoors to support a range of play experiences. The service supplied outdoor clothing including raingear and wellington boots so children can play outdoors in all weather.

The indoor areas were laid out to support the children's independence. Low level hooks were provided for personal belongings. There were clearly defined interest areas including construction areas, home areas, and spaces for messy play. There was a variety of equipment and materials, including books and mark-making materials visible and accessible to the children on open shelves. Areas with soft seating were available for children to rest or take a break from activities. Children's identity and belonging was promoted through art displays and family photograph walls. A keyworker system was in place to support secure relationships, and this was displayed with photographs of the children and staff members in the care rooms.

The inspector observed the children engaged in activities of their choice throughout the inspection. These included playdough, construction, messy play, and role play. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the children's dispositions, and recorded children's emerging interests to enhance play and learning experiences.

The service operated a rolling lunch table, and children brought their lunch from home. Children were observed taking their lunches from the fridge to the table as they pleased throughout the morning and staff sat with them engaged in conversation while they ate. Drinks of water were always available.

Children were supported to be independent with their personal care. The children used the toilet as they needed with staff reminding and assisting them to wash their hands afterwards. The inspectors observed the staff interacting warmly with the children, engaging positively and supporting them in their work and play.

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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised. The care rooms and outdoor play areas were observed to be safe and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff and children were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if

required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

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. The service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years for two adults employed.

Infection Control:

2. Mops and mop buckets used for cleaning the service were stored in the children's toilets posing a risk of cross contamination.
3. The nappy changing mat in use in the service was torn with internal foam padding exposed which could not be effectively cleaned, posing the risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The service has re applied for re vetting of two staff and are waiting on it to come. The person in charge has tracked it and it's in progress. Staff files will be checked quarterly and signed off with any GV expiring dates re applied for by the manager.

Infection Control:

2. Mop and buckets are now placed in the hallways of each toilet within reach of staff should there be a toileting accident. All staff are informed of the correct storage of the mops and there is a sign in each toilet stating this procedure- all staff aware as signs displayed in toilets and rooms. This is also added to the safety checklist.
3. The service has replaced the nappy changing mat with a new one and checking the mat has been added to the toilet's checklist.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

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Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.