

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL036
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Name of Service:	Bright Beginners
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Address of Service:	50 -52 Leinster House, Main Street, Rush, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K56 R624
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Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Nolan
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	13/03/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	46	PM	39
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Cully & AM. Coyle
Title:	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
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Description of service

Bright Beginners provides full day care, part time and sessional care to children from the ages 1 – 6 years. The service operates from the first floor of a commercial building in the village of Rush, Co. Dublin. The service consists of 4 care rooms, a kitchen, sanitary facilities, a staff room, an office and a rooftop outdoor space. Bright Beginners operates Monday to Friday from 7.00 am to 6.00 pm and also participates in the state funded early childhood care and education (ECCE) scheme from 9.00 am – 12.00 pm for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

On the day of inspection there were 11 staff members working in the service. The registered provider was also present in the service in the role of person in charge and assisted in the care rooms when needed. The service manager is currently on statutory leave, as is 3 other members of staff employed in the service. The service receives funding through the Access and Inclusion Model to reduce the adult to child ratio in the preschool room during the ECCE session. On the day of inspection there was a student present in the care rooms as part of their third level work placement programme.

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.

Additional Information

The inspection was conducted following receipt of feedback and concerns by Tusla Early Years Inspectorate.

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 II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider failed to notify the Early Years Inspectorate of a change in circumstances in relation to the following as per the schedule 4 Form for Notification of Change in Circumstances:

- The name of the designated person in charge.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider stated that a 'Change in Circumstances' form was submitted and approved.

Preventative action:

Registered provider to ensure all necessary changes are submitted to TUSLA using the Change in Circumstances form when required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Documentary evidence of notification to Tusla of a change in the name of the designated person in charge.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 8(1) has been adequately addressed.

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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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

(1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge. There was a named person available to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.15 am and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, a total of 13 staff files and the registered provider's file were reviewed. Two staff members whose files were reviewed were currently on statutory leave. One staff member whose file was reviewed was qualified to work with children but was currently employed in the role of cook. In addition, the inspectors requested to review the file of a student who was present in the service on the day of the inspection.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for 13 staff members, the registered provider and the student who was present on the day of inspection.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 13 staff members, the registered provider and the student who was present on the day of inspection. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting disclosures were available for 3 staff members and the student present on the day of inspection who had resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for more than 6 consecutive months as adults, according to their curriculum vitae.

(4) Twelve adults whose files were reviewed, including the registered provider, worked directly with the children attending the service as evidenced by the staff roster. All 12 adults held appropriate childcare qualifications on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

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) On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service.

(2) The adult to child ratios were correct in the service when the inspectors arrived unannounced at 9.15am and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- In the Junior Wobbler room there was 8 children between the ages of 15 months and 20 months being cared for by 2 adults.
- In the Senior Wobbler room there was 4 children between the ages of 21 months and 2 years being cared for by 1 adult.
- In the Toddler room there were 16 children between the ages of 2 and 3 years being cared for by 3 adults.
- In the playschool room there were 18 children between the ages of 3 year and 5 years being cared for by 3 adults. One staff members post was part funded by the Access and Inclusion Model scheme to reduce the adult to child ration during the morning preschool sessional hours.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 adults were present on the premises at all times, verified by staff rosters and staff attendance records maintained at the service.

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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- Childrens nappies were changed at scheduled times throughout the day and more frequently as required. Staff were observed warmly engaging with the children throughout the process. Older children were supervised during toileting and reminded to wash their hands.
- Staff were responsive to children's personal care needs for example cleaning younger children's noses and face, providing bibs at mealtimes, adding or removing clothing at appropriate times.
- Mealtimes in the service were observed to be a social experience for the children. During the inspection children were observed having morning snack consisting of cheese and raisins and later a hot dinner of mashed potato, parsnip, peas, and sausage. Children attending the Playschool room during the morning ECCE session consumed snacks provided by their parents.
- Drinking water and cups were available in the care rooms should the children for the children to access if thirsty throughout the day.
- Individual sleep routines were facilitated in the Junior Wobbler room in the morning and afternoon. The children had access to a designated sleep room which contained 5 standard cots. With the exception to the non-compliance detailed within Regulation 23, stackable beds were provided for children over 24 months who required a nap after dinner time.
- The staff were observed to support children during moments of minor conflict or upset in a calm and supportive manner.
- The children appeared to feel safe and secure with their caregivers as they called the adults by their name and looked to them for comfort or reassurance in times of need.

Supporting relationships around children:

- All staff in the service were observed to engage with children with enthusiasm and provide children with kind and caring interactions. Staff demonstrated familiarity with the children in their care by describing their routines, preferences and needs and speaking positively about the children.
- The staff team were observed to communicate with each other consistently throughout the inspection in relation to the care of the children.
- Each room used a daily report form to document the child's routine including meals, sleep times and other pertinent information that was shared with parents at collection.

Physical and material environment:

- Throughout the care rooms play resources and materials that were available were on low level shelving for the children to access.
- The Playschool room was laid out with areas of interest including a well-resourced home area with a range of accessorial toys including cooking utensils, dolls, dolls clothing, prams and shop equipment provided to enable the children to extend their imaginary play experiences. A well-resourced art trolley was provided in addition to a sand tray for the children to enjoy sensory play experiences. A broad range of tabletop and small world toys were also available for the children to use.
- An outdoor area is provided on the premises and is accessible via the Toddler room and Playschool room. The area is covered with an artificial grass surface and children had access to a climbing frame and slide, 2 plastic slides, a mud kitchen and a range of ride on toys. A rota is in place in the service to ensure that the children from all care rooms have access to the outdoor space throughout the day. During the inspection the children from the Playschool room and the Toddler room spent time in the outdoor area.

Non-Compliance Information

1. There were no interest areas developed for the children to initiate or sustain child led play experiences in the Junior Wobbler or Toddler room. There was a limited range of developmentally appropriate and challenging equipment and resources in the Junior Wobbler room. A play stove top cooker was provided in the Toddler room however there were no supportive equipment located alongside it to encourage and support the children in their play experiences.
2. There was a lack of sensory or wooden materials available for the children to use, there were no sand, water or other materials provided for the children to enjoy hands on sensory play experiences in the Junior Wobbler, Senior Wobbler or the Toddler room or in the outdoor area of the service.

3. The dress up materials in the Toddler room were stored in a box on top of each other which did not facilitate the children in using the costumes.
4. There was a number of battery-operated toys in the Junior Wobbler and a majority did not have batteries therefore were limited in their purpose and function.
5. A number of books provided in the Toddler room were torn and in poor condition.
6. There were insufficient chairs available in the dining room of the service to facilitate all of the children from the Toddler room to sit at the table for their meals. Two children who were developmentally able to sit at the table were placed in highchairs.
7. In the nappy changing area used by the Junior Wobbler and Toddler room there was no privacy afforded to children being changed at the same time as 2 nappy changing mats lay side by side on the countertop. In discussion with a staff member, it was confirmed that there are times of the day when 2 adults would change 2 children next to each other. Children should be afforded a level of privacy from their peers when having their personal care needs met.

The non compliances 1, 2 & 3 were identified at the last inspection of the service on the 13/03/2023 The registered provider provided written assurances in the corrective and preventative actions that procedures had been put in place to prevent a recurrence of the noncompliance however these were insufficient to ensure that the non-compliance did not re-occur.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

In relation to addressing the non-compliances above, the registered provider stated that the following corrective and preventative actions have been implemented:

1. The interest areas will be updated. These issues were addressed after our last inspection but unfortunately the toys and equipment had either been broken or moved to another room and not in the rooms noted on the day of inspection.
2. The staff regularly use sand, water, gloop, rice, pasta and many other sensory play experiences with the children but on the day of inspection this wasn't the case. Staff have been reminded to include sensory activities in their daily routine with children.
3. The dress up hooks in the Toddler room had been pulled off the wall by one of the children also which is why the materials were being temporarily stored in a box. This will be fixed.

4. Battery operated toys will be either be removed or have batteries replaced.
5. Torn books are being replaced with new ones.
6. Staff have been informed to remove some of the highchairs and bring a table and some chairs from the toddler room for mealtimes when required.
7. We will no longer change 2 children together in the nappy changing area.

Preventative actions:

- 1, 2 & 3: The task of informing the service manager when materials and equipment need to be replaced or updated to two senior members of staff and ensure environments are being reviewed regularly.
4. Going forward the service will provide toys that don't require batteries or ensure batteries are replaced when required.
5. Libraries are checked for torn books regularly and replaced when needed.
6. Staff have been informed on actions to take to prevent this happening.
7. If staff feel they need to be able to change 2 children at the one time in that area a dividing privacy screen will be installed.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the corrective and preventative actions submitted. The registered provider has assured the inspectorate that actions above are being implemented and improvement of environments is ongoing. This assurance has been accepted by the early years inspector and implementation of the above actions will be reviewed at the next inspection. Based on this information the non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 (a) have been adequately addressed.

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:

- The ground floor entrance to the building where the service is located was secured with the use of an intercom and electronic door lock. The same security system was in use at the entry to the service on the first floor. This reduces the risk of children exiting the service unsupervised and restricts unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The staircase was in good condition, was adequately lit and had suitable handrails provided to support safe use of the stairwell.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.
- The openable windows were made safe with the use of window restrictors or safety devices where necessary.

Infection Control:

- With exception to the non-compliance below, thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins to support effective hand hygiene procedures in the service.
- Staff members demonstrated familiarity with the infection control policy and procedures in relation to managing illness and infectious diseases. Staff were able to describe common incidents that would require a child being sent home from the service, such as cases of vomiting and diarrhoea, and the exclusion periods related to the illness. This practice was further evidenced through a review of text messages staff had to parents to notify them of their child's illness and the associated exclusion period.
- Children's soothers were stored in individual lidded tubs. Staff were familiar with procedures on cleaning and sterilising soothers. Staff described that soothers left in the service at the end of the day are cleaned and sterilised with the use of a microwavable soother steriliser.
- The children's sheets and blankets were laundered on the premises weekly or as required if soiled.
- Pedal operated bins were provided in the nappy changing and sanitary facilities.

Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.

Safe Sleep:

- With exception to the non-compliance below, based on examination of the children's attendance record all children under the age of 24 months have access to a standard cot on a daily basis. Five standard cots were provided in the designated sleep room and additional foldable cots were used in the care room at sleep time for children under 24 months.
- The inspectors observed that 10-minute physical sleep check observations were carried out on all sleeping children. These checks were recorded noting each child's colour, position and breathing pattern and the duration of the child's sleep. A member of staff was present in the room where children slept on floor beds for the duration of sleep time.
- Adequate space of at least 50cm was maintained between the cots and stackable beds in the sleep rooms in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In the Playschool room the children's morning snacks which they brought with them from home and contained perishable items including meat and dairy products were stored in the children's bags and not placed in the fridge on arrival to the service. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.
2. There was inconsistency with the nappy changing procedures resulting in practice that increased the risk of cross contamination. For example;
 - A staff member was observed while changing 2 children's nappies. The staff member did not change the disposable gloves or apron between changes. The nappy changing mat was not disinfected before the 2nd child's change. The children's hands were not washed following a nappy change. The staff member only washed their hands after both children had been changed.
 - Another staff member observed during nappy changing did not disinfect the changing mat after use.
3. There was no liquid soap available at the sink in the nappy changing area used by the Junior Wobbler and Toddler room. A staff member was observed using this sink to wash their hands and a child's hands following a nappy change. Liquid soap is required to support effective handwashing.

Safe Sleep:

4. On the day of inspection, a child aged 21 months was placed to sleep on a floor bed in the absence of a completed sleep plan. A sleep plan is required under Tusla guidance on safe sleep provisions for children under 24 months when children move from sleeping in a cot to a suitable floor bed.
5. The stackable floor bed provided for the child above aged 21 months was at variance to Tusla guidance on safe sleep provisions for children under 24 months.

Corrective and Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

In relation to addressing the non-compliances above, the registered provider stated that the following corrective and preventative actions have been implemented:

Infection Control:

1. Lunch boxes will be place in the fridge.
2. A Nappy Changing Guidelines form had been placed in each of the nappy changing areas detailing best practice. This has been discussed individually with each member of staff ensuring they are aware of the importance of abiding by these procedures.
3. Liquid soap will be available at all times and replaced when required.

Safe Sleep:

4. A sleep plan has been completed for this child.
5. An appropriate floor bed was available in the service on the day of inspection, but not used on the day. Staff have been reminded that the correct bed is to be used for this child was under 24 months.

Preventative actions:

Infection Control:

1. Person in charge to ensure all staff are aware that children's lunches are placed in the fridge.
2. Registered provider to ensure each member of staff adheres to these procedures at all times and all senior members of staff have instructed to enforce these procedures also.
3. Ensure soap is replace when required.

Safe Sleep:

4. The service will ensure all children under the age of 24 months has a completed sleep plan.
5. Staff will ensure the correct floor bed is used.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of the nappy changing procedures.
Copy of completed sleep plan.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. Based on this information the non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed. Implementation and sustainment of the preventative action plan detailed will require assessment at the next inspection.

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) With exception to the non-compliance below, there were records kept in relation to checking children in and out of each care room.

Non-Compliance Information

At 10.00 am a child attending the Toddler Room was not signed into the attendance record, this was confirmed with a member of staff.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Staff have been reminded to ensure that all children are signed in on arrival.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 24 has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 25 - First aid

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a person trained in first aid for children is, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

(1) Following review of staff files, it was evident that the registered provider ensured that there was a member of staff trained in First Aid Response (FAR) on the premises at all times.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required*

Compliance Information

(c) The premises of the service was adequately lit by means of natural and artificial lighting. The room temperatures in care rooms were adequate and comfortable and between the required range of 18 - 22°C on the day of inspection. The care rooms and sleep room were adequately ventilated by openable windows, with the sanitary accommodation at the Junior Wobbler room ventilated by means of mechanical ventilation.

(d) The care rooms and remainder of the premises was well maintained and in a clean and hygienic condition on the day of inspection. Weekly cleaning schedules were on display and being maintained daily in each care room, dining area and sanitary accommodations. The toys and equipment on the premises were clean and in good repair.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Compliance Information

(1) The service had an adequate complaints policy in place which outlined the procedures in relation to the requirements detailed in Regulation 32 (1) (a) (b) and (c). The information regarding this policy was also available in the 'Family Notice' folder which was on display in the hallway next to the 'comments and suggestions' box.