

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL040
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Sparks Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	Kinsealy Lane, Malahide, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K36 KX90
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lynsey McCabe
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	30/01/2025
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	24	PM	15
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	AM Coyle
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

	<p><b>Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</b></p> <p><b>QMS Ref: EYI-RRT12.1 V2.0 03/03/2023 Service ID: TU2015FL040</b></p>	<b>1 of 10</b>
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Bright sparks Montessori is a privately owned sessional service providing early years care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The service is located alongside a private residence on Kinsealy lane, north Dublin. There are two preschool rooms namely the Sycamore room and the Hawthorn room which becomes the Pine room for the children attending the afternoon sessional service. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme with children attending for sessional care from 09:00am to 12:30pm, 09:15am to 12:45pm and 13:00pm to 16:30pm depending on which preschool room the children are enrolled in. Two separate outdoor areas are located to the front and side of the service.

### Staffing

The service employs 8 staff members including the registered provider all of whom work directly with the children attending the service. Four staff members are employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio, and to work directly with a child with additional needs, when necessary, as part of the Access and Inclusion Model.

### Methodology

Tusla 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 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, 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) There was a designated person in charge of the service and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The named person in charge of the service was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

The files for 8 staff members including the registered provider were reviewed.

(2)(a) &(b) Two validated written references were available for 8 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 8 staff members whose files were reviewed.

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff. The Garda vetting records reviewed demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for 3 staff members who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service held an appropriate childcare qualification at level 5 or higher 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.*

#### Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.

(2) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection.

- In the Sycamore room there were 3 adults caring for 11 children aged 3 years 3 months to 4 years 11 months.
- In the Hawthorn room there were 2 adults caring for 13 children aged 3 years 3 months to 4 years 6 months.
- In the Pine room there were 3 adults caring for 15 children aged 3 years to 4 years 7 months.

### 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

(1)(a) The following observations are examples of how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service:

#### Basic Needs of the Children:

- There was a warm, welcoming and child centred atmosphere in the service as evidenced in the kind and supportive interactions observed taking place between the adults and the children.
- The children brought their own morning snack with them to the service with the snacks provided observed to be in line with the services healthy eating policy. In each of the 2 care rooms a system was in place whereby 2 children were chosen to distribute the snacks and water bottles on a daily basis, a responsibility that the children were observed to enjoy. One of the staff members sat at each of the tables chatting to the children encouraging conversation and extending interactions in a friendly and relaxed manner.
- The close proximity of the sanitary accommodation to the pre-school rooms facilitated the children to use the toilet independently with assistance provided to the children when necessary. The children were gently reminded to wash their hands afterwards.
- The practitioners were observed to be calm and responsive with the children and there was an emphasis on praise and encouragement in the service to promote positive behaviour.
- A cosy area was provided in the Sycamore room and a sensory room adjacent to the Hawthorn/Pine room was available for the children to relax as they chose.
- The children attending both care rooms were afforded the opportunity for a change of environment to the outdoor play area and were dressed appropriately prior to going outside. Children were given a choice as to how long they wished to play outdoors. A group of children attending the Sycamore room chose to remain inside and were readily facilitated to do so.

#### Supporting Relationships around Children

- In both care rooms the staff members were observed to provide the children with sensitive and nurturing interactions throughout the inspection. They were knowledgeable about children's interests and needs and spoke positively and warmly to and about all the children who were present during the inspection.

- In both care rooms the children were supported in their choice of activities with moments of joint laughter and shows of affection frequently observed taking place between the staff members and the children during the inspection. The staff members were observed acting as play partners with the children, providing space and opportunity for children to lead and direct play while readily supporting children when they chose to change or opt out of activities.
- The staff members were observed using a problem-solving approach which effectively supported the children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenges when participating in play and interactions. This prevented any of the minor issues observed from escalating.
- Transitions were well supported in the service. Throughout the session verbal strategies were used by the staff members to inform and prepare children for up-coming activities and movement.
- Family links were nurtured in the service with the children's family photographs displayed on the walls in both care rooms. Parents were greeted warmly and communicated with in an unhurried manner on their arrival to the service.

### Physical and material environment:

- The play materials and equipment were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, encouraged the children's curiosity and free movement.
- Both care rooms were well laid out with defined areas of interest including an extensive range of Montessori materials, home areas including play kitchens with a wide variety of supportive play materials, dressing tables were provided in both rooms and a shop with play accessories was available in the Sycamore room all of which enabled the children to extend their imaginary play experiences. Art materials and mark making resources were freely available to the children in both rooms. A selection of dolls with a variety of dolls clothing, construction resources, transport toys, and a wide range of tabletop materials were available in both care rooms.
- Chinese New Year was acknowledged in the service with the children enjoying food tasting in the Hawthorn room and a similar event was planned for the following day in the Sycamore room.
- A suitable broad range of books were provided in both care rooms and the children's language development was facilitated during the inspection through conversations, storytelling and singing.
- Two separate outdoor spaces were provided in the service, the garden area and the bike area. The garden area was located directly in front of the Hawthorn/Pine room, the children's gross motor play was enhanced through the provision of a climbing frame with a covered area and slide in addition to a separate wooden

climbing frame. A wooden 'Garda hut' accommodated a play kitchen and couch, sensory play was facilitated through the provision of a free-standing water apparatus, a playhouse, teepee and outdoor kitchen were also provided for the children to use. The area also provided the opportunity for running and free movement. The Bike area contained a stationary train, a wooden garage and a wide selection of cars and bikes for the children to use, the inspector was informed that both care rooms use either play area based on the children's choice.

### 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 entrance to the service was appropriately secured.
- The outdoor area was observed to be enclosed and secure.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in both care rooms in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance. The inspector was informed that the warm water supply was thermostatically controlled.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children.

##### Infection Control:

- A refrigerator was available in both care rooms and used to store the children's snacks which were provided from home by the parents, reducing the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.
- The children's tables were observed to be appropriately cleaned prior to and following the morning snack.
- The sanitary accommodation, pre-school rooms and indoor play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up-to-date cleaning schedules were maintained electronically in the service.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medications were stored out of the reach of children.

- There was a child-specific care plan available for a child attending the service to authorise staff members to administer an auto-injector adrenaline pen in the event that the child would become exposed to an allergen and develop signs of a reaction.

### Fire Safety:

- Documentary evidence was available to confirm that fire drills are completed on a monthly basis in the service.

### 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) A record was maintained of fire drills which had been completed in the service.
- (b) A maintenance record was available of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were last serviced on 24/05/2024.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were conspicuously displayed in the service.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate 36 sessional preschool children, with an expiry date 27/03/2025.

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