

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL041
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Community Preschool
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Address of Service:	Donabate Portrane Community Centre, Portrane Road, Donabate, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K36 F598
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Name of Registered Provider:	Jacinta Lowndes
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	29/05/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, 181-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co. Dublin K67 Y5C6.
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Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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 Sparks Community preschool is a not-for-profit community preschool which is located in a community centre on the outskirts of Donabate village in north Co Dublin. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children aged 3 to 6 years and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 9am to 12 midday Monday to Friday. The service operates from a room on the ground floor of the community centre with a dedicated entrance door. An outdoor area is located directly outside the care room door where a wooden cabin is located which is used to facilitate small group time and individual work with children.

Staffing

The service employs 4 staff members all of whom work directly with the children. The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending the service.

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 19, 23, 24,25, and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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 registered provider of this service did not correlate to the name detailed on the national register.
- The operational hours of the service did not correlate with the times listed on the national register. The service is operating from 9am to 12 midday Monday to Friday and is listed on the national register as operating from 9am to 3:30pm.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) The operational hours of the service are correct on the notice boards. The service is operating from 9am to 12 midday Monday to Friday.

Registered Provider is waiting on response from Tusla, how to update her name and the operational hours of the service on the national register.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of change in circumstances form.

Summary Comment

The change of circumstances form received from the service indicated a change to the person in charge and not to the registered provider of the service, the regulatory requirement has not been met and remains outstanding.

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 room leader was the designated person in charge of the service.

(b) The room leader was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

The files for 4 staff members all of whom work directly with the children were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for 3 staff members.

One validated written reference was available for 1 staff member.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for 4 staff members.

(d) International police vetting was available for one staff member who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Three staff members who worked directly with children in the service held appropriate childcare qualifications between level 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications. One staff member did not require a qualification as the staff member was working with children under a community employment work/ training programme and was excess to the required adult to child ratio in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) A second validated written reference was not available for one staff member.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(2) The staff member in question will obtain second reference in 2 weeks.

Preventive Action

(2) Registered Provider will update to include 2 written references for all future staff.

Supporting documentation submitted

One validated written reference.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 9 – Management and recruitment has been reviewed and accepted.

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) 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 ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

There were 4 adults working directly with 10 children.

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) Each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service in relation to the following:

Basic needs:

- On arrival, the children attending the preschool were engaged in meaningful play-based activities in the service. The 4 early years practitioners present were joining in with the children's play, providing encouraging and nurturing interactions to children and supporting them to locate and set up materials to extend their play. Children appeared comfortable and confident to make choices about their learning, and the adults were responsive to children's ideas and requests.

- The children bring their own morning snack with them to the service. Snack time was observed to be relaxed as the children were given ample time to sit and enjoy a variety of foods which they brought with them from home while the Early years practitioners sat with the children engaging them in conversation.
- All of the children in attendance were toilet trained and they were encouraged to use the bathroom independently with support provided as required. When necessary, the practitioners gently reminded the children to wash their hands.
- 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.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The early years practitioners engaged positively with the children and collaborated with them in play activities. The practitioners used positive facial expressions and warm vocal tones when engaging with the children and in turn the children showed confidence around the adults and an eagerness to engage them in conversation and play.
- The children's artwork and photographs were on display in the care room, which support children's wellbeing by feeling valued and appreciated.
- The practitioners in the service were observed taking the opportunity to interact with the parents at collection time and update them on their child's day in the service.

Physical and material environment:

- The resources were easily available and accessible on low level shelving. The children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- The service was well resourced with a home area which included a play kitchen with crockery and kitchen utensils for the children to extend their play, dolls, and a dolls house. Additionally, construction materials, transport toys including train tracks and cars, jigsaws, small world and tabletop resources, art materials and dress up materials which supported all areas of the children's development were available to the children. The children present on inspection were observed to be busy, engaged and very happy in their environment.
- A range of books were available in the care room to support the children's language and reading development.

- An enclosed outdoor area was provided to the front of the service and was accessed directly from the care room. The area was surfaced with safety tiles, a large water tray and a large sand tray were provided for the children to enjoy sensory play. Ride on and push along toys were available for the children in addition to a slide, a basketball hoop and small rockers. A wooden well-resourced cabin in the outdoor area provided an additional learning space and was used for small group and individual work with the children. All of the children present on the day of inspection enjoyed time in the outdoor area.

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 external and internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service. The door in place between the main care room and the adjoining community hall was secured to prevent the children from accessing this area unsupervised.
- The outdoor play area was gated and secured with walls and fencing to prevent a child gaining unsupervised access to a roadway or other source of danger.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach of children on high shelving and in locked cupboards.
- The service's designated emergency exits were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

- Warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided in the sanitary accommodation in the service. The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and following messy play.
- The premises and play materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display in the service.

Administration of Medication:

- Safe procedures were in place for the administration of medication. No child was observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

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

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. Children's snack food, some of which contained meat and dairy produce, were not stored under refrigerated conditions, and were kept in the children's bags at room temperature on the day of inspection. This increased the risk of bacteria multiplying to levels which could result in food poisoning.
2. The covering on the window seat in the service was torn in places with the foam filling exposed underneath. This does not allow for effective cleaning.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. Currently getting the fridge for August to install
2. Seat will be repaired during summer break

Preventive Action

2. Replace seat cover as needed in future.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

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) All of the 10 children in attendance on the day of inspection were signed into the attendance register.

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.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that a suitably equipped first aid box for children-

- (a) is safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises, and*
- (b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.*

Compliance Information

(1) A person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certifications provided for inspection in respect of the manager and deputy manager, both of whom work in the service on a daily basis.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of children.