

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015GY044
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Montessori Preschool
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Address of Service:	Radharc Na Mara National School, Mervue, Co. Galway.
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Eircode:	H91 A3H2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Aine Crowe
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	12/04/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	27
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla – Child and Family Agency, Early Years Inspectorate, Quality and Regulation Directorate, Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Co. Galway.
Inspection undertaken by:	S. Meehan.
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

This privately owned preschool service is in Radharc Na Mara, national school, Mervue, Galway. The preschool caters for children aged between 2 years and 5 years, from Monday to Friday between 8.50 am and 13.30 pm. This part time service offers the option of part time care service, an (ECCE) Early Childhood Care and Education and sessional care programme from 8.50 am to 12 pm. The preschool has three playrooms, sanitary area, nappy changing facilities, office and a kitchenette. The pre-school children have an outdoor play area to the side of the premises for play activities, exploration and fresh air.

Staffing

The registered provider is on the premises daily. There is a named person in charge and a named designated deputy. There were 10 adults which included the registered provider on the premises. Eleven adults including 1 relief staff member work directly with the children, hold at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 and safety. 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 registered provider, 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 and there was a named person available to deputise in the service.

(b) The registered provider was on the premises when the early years inspector arrived and remained on site for the duration of the inspection. Staff rosters indicated that either the designated person in charge or deputy were available, on the premises, when the pre-school children were present.

All adults files were reviewed eleven in total.

(2)(a)&(b) Twenty-two of the validated references on file in respect of 11 adults were from a past employer or a source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the 11 adults.

(d) Documentary evidence indicated that 1 adult had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months while over the age of 18 years and therefore required police vetting. The police vetting was available for inspection.

(4) Eleven adults held a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and education.

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) The preschool attendance records and roster for the previous 3 weeks were reviewed and indicated that an adequate number of staff were working directly with the children. On the day of inspection, the adult and child ratio were correct and maintained.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to, during the inspection.

On the morning of the inspection, there were 36 preschool children being directly cared for by 10 staff.

In the afternoon of the inspection, there were 27 preschool children being directly cared for by 8 staff.

(8)(a) The registered provider ensured that 2 staff were on the premises during the operating hours of 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

19 (1) (a)

BASIC NEEDS:

- Healthy eating was promoted within the service and the food observed was healthy and nutritious. The snacks provided by parent and guardians consisted of a selection of sandwiches, fruit and yogurts.
- The children were afforded plenty of time to enjoy their snack in a relaxed and unhurried manner. Crockery and plates were given to children during snack times, laid out on age-appropriate low tables.
- Perishable items belonging to children were stored in the service fridges.
- The children had access to a water station on a low-level table, that allowed them the opportunity to take a drink if thirsty.
- Children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their own level of independence.
- Each child's privacy and dignity were preserved, while they were either toileted independently or with some assistance as required.
- Nappy changing took place as required throughout the day and the correct procedure in line with best practise was observed. Adults were observed to be caring in their interaction with children at nappy changing.
- The children had the opportunity to rest or relax on large couches, in a designated rest and relaxation area, in the playrooms. Sleep mats were available for children attending on a part time basis.
- On the day of inspection, the children were observed playing in the outdoor area which had a variety of special interest areas.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- A key person system was in place for each child to support their development and to inform curriculum planning. The role of the key person was to liaise with parents and guardians. Individual care programmes were in place where required.

- Staff stated that they verbally provided parents with daily information on their child’s experiences in the pre-school including the child’s likes, interests, preferences, and play activities engaged in. This information was provided at collection and drop off times, via text messages, multimedia application and by phone calls.
- Each child had a learning journal and scrapbook identifying their likes preferences and showing their art and craft work.
- The staff were observed to be caring and supportive in their interactions with the children. During observed interactions, the staff demonstrated that they knew the children well, recognising and valuing their individual interests, needs and learning. The staff were observed to be interested in the children, spoke in low tones, listened to them, and responded to their requests. The staff interacted in a positive way with the children e.g., they sat at children’s level, maintained good eye contact, showed empathy and a good understanding of each child.
- Staff were observed helping children find solutions, supporting them and talking to children in a variety of ways, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, extending a child’s activities, and initiating games and activities.
- The programme of care was flexible and guided by the children’s choices. Children were supported by the staff during periods of individual and group-based activities, the staff sensitively supervised and intervened when necessary.
- On the day of inspection, the children played and interacted well with the staff and their peers. The children were observed at imaginative play at the rocket station, at water play, action songs, drawing, running, arts and crafts, one to one work and tabletop activities.

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) One staff working in the pre-school service have a current first aid responder qualification and two had first aid training.
- (2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible conspicuous position in the proposed playroom.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available with content items in date.