

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE199
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Name of Service:	Shining Stars Academy Ltd
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Address of Service:	Coney Ave, Coneyboro, Athy, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	R14 KX65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Christine Bowden
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	09/12/2025
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Date 2 of Inspection:	07/01/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	34
Day 2	AM	52	PM	40

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace Road Naas, Co. Kildare W91 X38W
Inspection undertaken by:	Day 1: F. Maher, T. Duignan Day 2: F. Maher
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

Shining Stars Academy is one of two, private full day care pre-school services and one standalone school age service operated by the registered provider in Athy, Co. Kildare. Full day care along with part-time and sessional care and education is offered to children 0-6 years old. This service is also registered to provide school aged care. The pre-school service is located in a purpose-built premises in a private residential housing estate on the outskirts of Athy. Six pre-school rooms, including one pre-school room located in a modular unit to the rear of the premises, an office, kitchen and three play areas are provided.

Due to an electricity outage 9 December 2025, the inspection was suspended at that time and rescheduled. Day 2 of the inspection continued 7 January 2026.

Staffing

There are twenty-five adults employed in the service, this includes the registered provider who was not present on either inspection day. The registered provider does not work directly with the children.

Day 1: There were twenty-two adults present in the service, of these, fifteen adults were working directly with the children, one student was on college placement, one adult was on work experience, there was one cook, one relief staff member, the person and deputy person in charge and the area manager who arrived to the service at 11:15am.

Day 2: There were twenty-one adults present in the service, of these, fourteen adults were working directly with the children, there was one cook, the person and deputy person in charge, the area manager, one maintenance person and two school age staff members who arrived to the service from 1pm.

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

These inspections were 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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the persons in charge, area manager, 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)(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise; both were present on the premises throughout the inspection.

The records of twenty-seven adults employed and/or present in the service were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference were available in respect of twenty-seven adults whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for all adults whose records were reviewed.

The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all staff employed.

(d) Police vetting was available for thirteen adults who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Nineteen staff members held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d)
Police vetting was required for one adult who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Individual training with management on how to complete staff files and what are the documentation we required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Document x1

Summary Comment

The requirement for Regulation 9(2)(d) has been met, the outstanding document has been submitted.

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

9 December 2025

(1)
There were 50 children attending the service being supervised directly by 15 staff members during the inspection.

7 January 2026

(1)

There were 52 children attending the service being supervised directly by 14 staff members during the inspection.

(2)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during both days as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)

There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of both inspections.

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 main entrance gate and door to the service was secure and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school service.

Daily indoor room and outdoor risk assessments were completed and maintained to ensure a safe play and work environment for the children and staff.

During conversations with staff members, they advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately removed or cut the food into smaller pieces. Staff members in each room also advised they would remove any beaded necklace if observed that a child may be wearing them.

No hazards were observed indoors or in the outdoor area as the service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the toys and equipment and safe storage of cleaning agents which were out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

The staff members were familiar with current safe sleep guidance to reduce the risk of sudden infant death including completing 10-minute sleep check observations on all sleeping children and documenting the colour, position and breathing pattern of sleeping children in their care. The sleep room was equipped with 4 standard cots and a further four foldable cots were available for the sleep needs of children less than 2 years old availing of periods of sleep during the day. The sleep room temperature was maintained between 16-20°C and was recorded at 18.1°C at 12:06pm.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were recorded and staff in each room outlined the fire evacuation route taken from each the rooms and the location of the assembly point. All fire exits had conspicuous signage and all the exits and routes to safety were not obstructed.

Outing:

Outings take place from the service and the staff were familiar with the outings policy that guided practice to ensure the safety of the children.

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.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the electronic attendance records maintained for the pre-school rooms on both days of the inspection.
- (2)
Not applicable as this was not a drop-in service.
- (3) (a),(b)

The registered provider ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)
The person in charge confirmed that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

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)
Persons were trained First Aid Response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)
The first aid equipment was safely stored, in conspicuous positions throughout the service.

(b) A suitably equipped first aid box for children was available at all times to the adults caring for the children attending 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

A written record was available of fire drills which were completed monthly in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place 18 December 2025.

(b)
A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. Firefighting equipment was last serviced 7 August 2025 and the smoke/fire detection system was last serviced 7 January 2026.

(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

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2026. The insurance provided cover for 80 children.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(2)
It was observed on inspection that material changes had been made to the second pre-school room on the left-hand side of the corridor from the main entrance. This room had been divided into two separate rooms and renamed 'Rainbow' and 'Forest' rooms; the registered provider ensured there was adequate clear floor space for the play and movement of the age range and number of children attending each room on a sessional and full daycare basis as outlined in Table 1 below,

Table 1

Room	Rainbow Room	Forest Room
Clear Floor Space	21.9 m ²	20 m ²
Age Range	2-6 years	2-6 years
	11 Sessional	11 Sessional
	9 Full Day Care	9 Full Day Care