

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015LM006

Name of Service: Bright Buttons

Address of Service: Day Nursery & After School, Leitrim Village, Co. Leitrim

Eircode: N41 HY98

Name of Registered Provider: Paula Guckian

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 25/07/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	5
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: Donegal Early Years Inspectorate,
St. Conal's Campus,
Letterkenny,
Co. Donegal.
F95 XK94

Inspection undertaken by: N. McEndoo

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

Description of service

Bright Buttons is a privately owned full day care preschool. The service is registered to provide sessional, part-time and full day care for children aged 0 – 6 years. The preschool occupies a two-story premises with an adjacent building offering a sessional service on the grounds of the service. There were two care rooms in operation on the day of inspection.

Staffing

The service employs ten adults in total. The registered provider works in an administrative role within the service. There were six adults present on the day of inspection and of these, five were working directly with the children which included the deputy manager who provided cover if required. There was one adult who worked exclusively in the kitchen.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 16 – Records in relation to the pre-school service. A sample of 10 records were reviewed to evaluate compliance with Regulation 16(1)(k). The scope of the inspection included two rooms within the service, identified as Year One and Year Two.

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*
- (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.*

(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)

The registered provider ensured that.

- (a) There was a designated person in charge and a named adult to deputise in their absence.
- (b) The designated person in charge was available on the premises throughout the period of inspection.
- (c) There was 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.

(2)

In line with the requirements of Regulation 9, vetting records for 10 adults, employed by the service were reviewed and the following information was noted.

- (a) 17 written validated references from past employers for 10 of the adults.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults.
- (d) Police vetting from the police authorities in another state was available for one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of six consecutive months or more.

(4)

Nine of the adult files reviewed, evidenced they held a major award at level 5 or above in early childhood care and education on the national qualification framework, or qualifications deemed by the Department of Children, Disability and Equality (DCDE) to meet the regulatory requirement.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

The following vetting information was not available:

- (a) Two written validated references from the past employers of one adult.
- (b) A validated reference from past employer of one adult.
- (d) Up to date employment experience record for three adults. It is acknowledged that records were submitted after the inspection date, however the records do not contain sufficient information to demonstrate that IPV is not required.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a)(b)(d)

Validated written references have been obtained and verified. Employment history records have also been reviewed and confirmed, with no requirement identified for International Police Vetting. Going forward, all references will be validated immediately upon receipt from the candidate and prior to any commencement of employment. A management meeting was held to revisit and reinforce our recruitment and reference check policies. All reference checks will be followed up in a timely manner and in accordance with policy.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of required details submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 9 have been adequately addressed.

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 adults working directly with the preschool children attending the service.
- (2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained throughout the inspection.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
 - (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*
- (3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (i) Records were available on file to show details of staff rosters on a daily basis.
- (k) A sample of 10 records were available on file detailing any accidents, injuries or incidents involving a pre-school child attending the service.
- (3) The records were made available to the inspector by the designated person in charge on request.

Non-Compliance Information

- (k)
- Of the sample of 10 accident and incident records reviewed, 7 did not contain a manager's signature.

- The record template did not provide scope to document a risk assessment where one may have been deemed necessary. This issue was acknowledged and promptly addressed by the person in charge on the day of inspection, following its identification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The Manager has updated the accident/incident form to include the risk assessment form, making it more accessible to all staff.

Additionally, a new weekly practice has been introduced: every Friday, the Manager or Deputy Manager will meet with each room leader to review all completed forms and sign off on any outstanding reports. This process ensures that all documentation is completed thoroughly and efficiently by the end of each week.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of updated form submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

Adequate indoor play facilities were provided within the service. A play-based programme was in operation, supported by a well-resourced playroom divided into various interest areas. These included a home corner furnished with a kitchen, dining table, microwave and washing machine; a construction area with trucks, garages and building blocks; sensory play areas featuring play doh, water and sand tables; and an arts and crafts area to encourage creativity. Additional areas for role play were available, including dress-up zones, hairdressing dolls and

toys. A well-stocked library supported language development. There was also low-level shelving containing tabletop activities, puzzles and jigsaws promoting coordination and fine motor skill development.

The outdoor play area, located at the rear of the property, was fenced and secure. It was suitably equipped to support children's physical development with opportunity for risky play. It featured climbing frames, slides, outdoor mud kitchen, chalk boards, rope ladder and a covered area to shelter from the rain. The ground area was covered with soft play tiles. A variety of ride-on toys, tyres for climbing and footballs, were all available to promote gross motor skill development. There was ample space both indoors and outdoors for children to move freely from one activity to the other.

(1) (b)

Facilities for rest and relaxation were available in the Year 1 room. Soft padded armchairs and sofas were located away from the main play area, offering a comfortable space for relaxation or quiet reading time.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (b)

During the visual inspection of the Year 2 room, it was not immediately evident that a designated rest area was present. Upon discussion with the person in charge, the inspector was informed that the soft padded playhouse served as the rest area. However, during the inspection period, this space was actively used as part of the children's daily play activities. A library area with a rug was available, but it was not conducive to rest. No alternative space for rest or relaxation was observed, which may limit opportunities for children to rest if needed.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The team has carried out an assessment of Preschool Room 2 and acknowledges that the quiet area was not functioning as intended on the day of inspection, despite being set up for relaxation. In response, the team has refurbished the space and committed to maintaining it exclusively for quiet time and relaxation.

It is recognised that this will require close supervision at the beginning of term to help children understand the purpose of the area and ensure it remains a calm, restful space. Staff will actively remind children of its intended use and will ensure it is not used as a play area.

Only appropriate equipment will be placed in the quiet area, including cosy blankets and other comforting items to support children's relaxation. Additionally, cot beds are available in the room should children wish to use them.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photo evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted have been reviewed. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 20 have been adequately addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A healthy eating policy was in place and implemented within the service. Designated kitchen staff were responsible for preparing and cooking all meals and snacks provided to children in attendance. On the day of inspection, an adequate quantity of food was available for each child, and meals were observed to be nutritious and varied throughout the day. A four-week rotating menu plan was available for reference. Water was provided with meals, and the service had procedures in place to offer alternative meals in cases of refusal, allergies, or intolerances. Children who brought their own food had their lunch boxes stored appropriately in the fridge. Meals observed to be served on the day included lunch of spaghetti hoops with toast and a side portion of raisins, a main meal of fish fingers, mashed potatoes, and baked beans, followed by lemon loaf for the afternoon snack.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service had a certificate of insurance on display for the maximum number of 70 children that they were registered for attending a full day care service with an expiry date of the 27 March 2026.