

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH015
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Name of Service:	Bridget's Montessori
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Address of Service:	Balsaran, Duleek, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	A92 HWF9
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Name of Registered Provider:	Bridget Woods
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	01/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	58	PM	26
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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

Bridgets Montessori is operating a sessional and part-time service. The service can accommodate up to 66 pre-school children attending at any one time. The operating hours are 09.00am to 14.30pm for pre-school children availing of sessional and part-time hours each weekday. The age range catered for are children aged 2 years to 6 years. The service consists of three care room and sanitary accommodation adjoining them. The outdoor area is available to the back of the premises and fencing is erected around the premises

Staffing

There are nine staff members employed in the service. The registered provider also works in the service. One staff member is employed under the access and inclusion model (AIM).

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.

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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme."

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.

Ten staff files were reviewed:

(2) (a)(b) Twenty validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosure was available for all adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for 6 staff members. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) All childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the access and inclusion model.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service. There was nine staff members caring for 58 children.

(2) The adult/child ratio was correct.

- **Ladybird Room:** had 3 staff members with 19 children ranging in age from 2 years to 3 years of which 10 were attending the parttime day care with 9 availing of the sessional service.
- **Bumblebee Room:** had 3 staff members with 19 children ranging in age from 2 years 11 months to 4 years of which 10 were attending the parttime day care with 9 availing of the sessional service.
- **Butterfly Room:** had 3 staff member (1 providing AIM support) with 20 children ranging in age from 3 years 10 months to 4 years of which 9 were attending the parttime day care with 11 availing of the sessional service.

The registered provider was also present and available to cover the care rooms if needed

(8) (a) According to the staff roster, the registered provider ensured that 2 adults were always present on the premises.

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 were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members sat with the children at snack and dinner time helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- Staff members were responsive to the children's cues should they need to use the toilet, with discreet supervision provided and assistance given if required.
- Children were facilitated to self-direct their own play. The children were afforded the opportunity to choose activities and to follow through on their choices and change activities if they so wish. Children were moving between the outdoor and indoor area as they wished.
- All children were observed enjoying outdoor play with both their peers and staff members at their allocated time.

- The themes in the care rooms were based on “Autumn” and “All About Me” and indoor/ outdoor activities conducted which supported this theme. Some children were settling into the service and were taking in their family photos for the wall. Children proudly showed their photos to their peers during circle time and spoke about their family. The service showed a positive regard towards the families of the children and family links were nurtured in the service with family photographs displayed on the wall in the care rooms which gave a sense of identity and belonging. Art work supported the themes, such as paper plates decorated with their hair and eye colour etc.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members communicated with parents through an electronic device and verbally on a daily basis regarding activities pertaining to their children. Children and parents were greeted at drop off and collection with friendly conversation overheard.
- The staff encouraged the children to engage positively with each other by adopting simple social rules such as turn taking, sharing in play activities and resolving minor disputes.
- Children had ample opportunity to finish their lunches and chat to their peers. The morning routine was unrushed which facilitated the children to move between activities when they were ready.

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-

(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.

(3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that-

(a) a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises, or

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Stackable beds were available for the children if they required a sleep. Within the care rooms there were mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest.

(3) (a) An outdoor space was available to the rear of the service. The space was walled, fenced and gated. The surface area consisted of a low impact surface, grass, pebbles, artificial grass, bark and a cement pathway. Sheds were available for storage of the outdoor equipment.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The care rooms had a range of play materials and equipment that offered stimulation, exploration and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choices, encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play and movement.
- The outdoor spaces were well developed to offer children a range of different experiences. All areas were well supported with equipment to enhance the children’s play.
- Equipment included a tunnel, blackboards, planting areas, swings, house with a slide, bug hotel, tuff trays with animals, ride on toys, dolls and buggies, wooden bridge, wooden car to sit into, wooden house, balance beams, wheelbarrow, buddy bench, ball and basketball net and planting boxes. Covered areas were available for the children over the mud kitchen area and messy play areas. Storage areas were also available with additional play equipment.

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

Children attending the ECCE session brought in their lunch from home. Children who remained in the service for parttime care receive a second snack from the service. On the day of inspection children’s snack consisted of ham, cheese, apple and crackers. Children had their own drink bottles from home.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- The main door to the service was secured and the whole outdoor area was enclosed by walls and fencing. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and the outdoor spaces.
- Indoor and outdoor risk assessments were carried out on a daily basis and documented on a daily risk assessment sheet.
- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- All furniture and display units had a stable base with no risk of toppling identified.

Infection Control:

The following infection control measures were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.
- All bins for contaminated waste were foot pedal operated.
- Warm water, hand paper towel and liquid soap was available in the children's sanitary facilities. The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times.

Fire Safety:

The following Fire Safety practices were observed in the service as demonstrated by the following examples:

- All emergency exit doors were accessible in the event of an evacuation needed except for the sleep room see non-compliance below.
- Staff members had up to date Fire Safety Training.
- Fire drills were recorded on a monthly basis

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

Garda vetting was available for 6 staff members. However, the vetting disclosures was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Garda vetting has been renewed for the six staff members and submitted to the early year's inspectorate. The registered provider will renew garda vetting prior to expiry.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety

Renewed garda vetting's received for the 6 staff members.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance in Regulation 23.

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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

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) The service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

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 written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 29th September 2025.

(b) A record was maintained of the firefighting equipment which were last serviced on the 16th February 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) A maintenance record was not maintained of the smoke alarms in the service. This practice was found to be non-compliant on the previous inspection on 14th March 2023. The corrective actions submitted following that inspection failed to prevent recurrence of this non-compliance.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The smoke alarms were serviced on the 6th October 2025. The maintenance was submitted to the early years inspectorate.

The registered provider has put a reminder on her PC for the due date of next Alarm Service check.

Supporting documentation submitted

The maintenance certificate dated 6/10/2025 has been submitted to the early year's inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The assurances from the registered provider has been accepted to address and to sustain compliance in regulation 26.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately insured for 66 children at any one time attending for full day care. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28th March 2025 to the 27th March 2026.