

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MO009
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Name of Service:	Ballinrobe Bright Beginnings
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Address of Service:	Convent of Mercy, Convent Road, Ballinrobe, Co. Mayo
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Eircode:	F31 T667
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Name of Registered Provider:	Kate Keane
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date(s) of Inspection:	16/04/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	24	PM	7
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Year's Inspectorate, TUSLA, Child and Family Agency, 2nd Floor, St. Mary's HQ., Castlebar, Co. Mayo.
Inspection undertaken by:	B Lavin
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).

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Description of service

Ballinrobe Bright Beginnings is a privately operated early years service which is situated on the outskirts of Ballinrobe town in Co Mayo. Part-time and sessional services are provided for children aged from 2 to 6 years of age. The service is registered to operate from 09:00 to 14.00. A registered school aged service is also provided. The service is in a building previously used as a convent on the outskirts of Ballinrobe town. It is operated from one ground floor playroom and one first floor playroom. There is a large outdoor area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There were three adults working directly with the early years children on the day of the inspection. This included the registered provider who is involved in the day-to-day operation of 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 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 -

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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.*

(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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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.

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Compliance Information

- 1)(a) The registered provider was the designated person in charge and there was a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) During the period of inspection, the registered provider was on the premises and facilitated the inspection.
- (2) The files of the six staff members employed in the service were reviewed.
 - (a) There were nine written and appropriately validated references available from a past employer.
 - (b) There was one written and appropriately validated reference available from a source other than a past employer for one adult working in the service.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the staff working in the service. The service adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures were required and on file for four staff members who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of over six months as an adult.
- (4) The six adults working directly with the children had evidence of an award in Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education or qualifications deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)(a)(b) A written validated reference for two staff members was not on file in the preschool service.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were not carried out completely before two staff members were appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Two written and validated references are now on file for the two staff members. Going forward these procedures will be carried out prior to any staff members taking on duties within the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence submitted to the office of the Inspectorate.

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Summary Comment

The actions and evidence submitted were reviewed and the noncompliance identified under Regulation 9 has 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.

(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) There were five adults working directly with children on the day of inspection.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratios were provided on the morning of inspection in accordance with the required ratios considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service as outlined below:

- Junior room: 3 adults cared for 12 children aged between 3 to 5 years of age.
- Senior room: 2 adults cared for 12 children aged between 4 to 5 years of age.

(8) There were two adults present in the service during the operation hours of the service.

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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

Basic Needs

- Drinking water was available to all children in individual beakers throughout the day.
- Children were observed eating their snack provided by the parents/guardians which consisted of fruit, yogurt, cheese and sandwiches. Children were supported during mealtimes with opening food items when needed. Independence was encouraged with self-help skills.
- Children sat at tables and chairs which were appropriate for their height and/or stage of development.
- The staff were observed sitting at the child's level and chatted in a respectful manner.
- The privacy and dignity of each child was respected during toileting.
- Appropriate rest facilities were available in the care rooms and children were observed spending time in this area for short periods of rest throughout the day.
- Children had easy access to the outside areas throughout the day. The children moved freely between indoors and outdoors. The children from the senior room had outdoor playtime in the adjacent public playground.
- The adults working with the children were sensitive and responsive in promoting positive behaviours and supported children to find positive solutions to sharing toys, equipment and turn taking.
- Children had plenty of opportunities to move themselves, to practice and improve their emerging skills, such as co-ordination and balance.

Supporting relationships

- The service supported the children in forming and sustaining positive relationships with staff.
- The staff were actively involved in children's play where appropriate, initiating games and joining in when invited to by children.
- The staff behaved in a way that created a positive atmosphere, having frequent social conversations, joint laughter and showing affection.

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- The staff listened to the voice of the child as they communicated their needs, thoughts and experiences both verbally and non-verbally, by reading children's cues, gestures and body language.
- Soft tones were used with the children, along with the child's individual name, getting down to their level and making eye contact.
- The atmosphere in the learning environment was encouraging and unhurried.
- Staff guided and supported children who needed more help. Staff used positive strategies to support children's inclusion for example using personal greetings, news of the day, looking at family photographs, choice board, visual routines chart and giving appropriate encouragement.
- Staff communicated with parents and guardians by sharing knowledge and observations of the child's interests, strengths, developmental and care needs, approaches to learning, changes in their life and any other concerns at drop off and collection times, by phone and by text.
- The staff were observed helping children to develop their social skills, supporting them and talking to the children in a variety of ways- discussing, modelling and initiating games and activities.

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 entrance door was secured to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The outdoor areas were secured with fencing and gates to protect the children within the outdoor play area.
- Medication and cleaning agents were stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.
- The blind cords were appropriately secured to the windows throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded, pedal operated bins.

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- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after activities, wiping their noses, toileting and before mealtimes.
- Cleaning products were inaccessible to the preschool children in care rooms.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered to a child by staff on the day of inspection.
- Temperature reducing medication was available. It was safely stored and in date. In conversation staff were able to detail the procedures for administering medication to children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The service's insurance with an expiry date of 14/04/2027, was for a part time service, for a maximum number of 49 children. The insurance covered the following:

- public liability
- personal accident
- insurance against fire and theft
- buildings
- outings undertaken as part of the service provision