

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015OY025		
Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings		
Address of Service:	Ferbane Business & Technology Park, Aughaboy, Ferbane, Co. Offaly		
Eircode:	R42 NR12		
Name of Registered Provider:	Kevin Gavin		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	10/07/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM 23
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Springfield, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.		
Inspection undertaken by:	C.O' Connor Hughes & K. Murphy		
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.		

Description of service

The Early Years' Service is a community-based service operated by the Ferbane Community Childcare Group Committee. The age range of children enrolled in the service is from 0 to 6 years of age. The opening hours are between 08:00 and 18:00 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The service is located in a single storey purpose-built premises. Five pre-school rooms, two sleep rooms, a staff room, a kitchen and an office are provided. Outdoor play areas are attached to the rear and side of the service

Staffing

There are twenty-one adults employed in the service. Nine adults were working directly with children. A student was present on work experience in the service. A cook provided meals for the children attending the service. The designated person in charge facilitated the inspection and attended the closing meeting. The registered provider does not work with children.

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.

- Regulation 8 – Notification of Change in Circumstance
- Regulation 9 -Management and Recruitment (1)(a)(b) 9(2)(a)(b)(c)(d) (4)

- Regulation 11– Staffing Levels (1)(2) (8)(a)
- Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of Child (1)(b)
- Regulation 20- Facilities for Rest and Play
- Regulation 22- Food and Drink
- Regulation 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child
- Regulation 24 – Checking in and Out and Record of Attendance
- Regulation 25 - First Aid
- Regulation 26 – Fire Safety Measures
- Regulation 28 – Insurance

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 person in charge, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The registered provider submitted a change in circumstance to indicate the new person in charge of the service on the 11 January 2024. The change in circumstance was accepted by TUSLA.

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)

The person in charge and a deputy were available in the service.

(b)

The person in charge was present for the duration of the inspection.

Twenty-two files including the file of the student present on work placement and the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers and from a source other than a past employer. Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the twenty-two files reviewed.

In respect of twenty one of the twenty-two files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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 in respect of one of the twenty-two files reviewed. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d)

Police vetting was available in respect of two adults who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(4)

Staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at levels 5 to 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a letter of eligibility to practice.

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 minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were thirty-one children attending the service supervised directly by nine adults in the morning.

There were thirty-one children present in the afternoon supervised by eight adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises during the hours of operation.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Children were observed to move between the indoor and outdoor environments enjoying physical play and gross motor activities as well as imaginative and sensory play outdoors. Staff helped to ensure that the children were protected from the intense heat and sun experienced. Canopied areas outside the pre-school rooms were utilised to provide shade and shelter. Sun cream and hats were applied to each child. A trolley of cool drinks was brought outdoors and children were rotated between short periods to play in the sun and longer periods to play in the sheltered areas with water and sand play.

The care practices and routines were child led with the staff following the individual verbal and non-verbal cues of the child. Children who went to the toilet independently were supervised by a staff member. Nappy changing was carried out regularly and as needed. Staff were observed to communicate and interact positively with the child during nappy changing. Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snacks and meals. Younger children wore bibs in the baby room to protect their clothing during mealtimes. A little helper system was observed in the toddler room as the children were encouraged to hand out the dinner to their peers.

Staff sat with and supported children at mealtimes as they encouraged conversations and interactions with the children. Children were encouraged to feed themselves and staff assisted the children as required. Water stations were available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms. Children slept in a restful and peaceful atmosphere in the cots in the sleep rooms and on low level beds in the toddler room. Children were observed to relax in the cosy rest areas established in the pre-school rooms.

There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child, their personalities and their daily routines. Staff were observed to give comfort and reassurance to the children. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and mealtimes. Seamless transitions were noted as the children were given a lead in time to change from one activity to another. Positive behaviour strategies were observed during the inspection. Staff used

a calm approach using soft language tones, giving positive praise and encouragement to children. Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

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.

(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,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Suitable play equipment indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Separate sleep rooms were available connected to the baby and wobbler room equipped with nine cots. Low level beds were available for children over two years of age. Cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

A high-level composite and metal fence secured the perimeter of the outdoor area. Each pre-school room had direct access to an outdoor play area. Natural grass and absorbent surface areas were in place.

Toys and equipment included covered sand trays, water play trays, a small slide unit, a mud kitchen and a dig area, tyres, small plastic slides and a variety of bikes and trikes.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

A foothold was noted in two cots in the baby sleep room which posed a potential risk of entrapment to a young child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Incorrect smaller mattress sizing was placed in the two cots. Since the inspection children have been moved to different cots and new standard size mattresses have been ordered.

The suitability of cots for use has been added to our risk assessment checklist for staff to review daily.

Supporting documentation submitted

Invoice for mattress.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector addressed the non-compliance.

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

The meals and snacks were freshly prepared on site by a cook. A menu plan was in place depicting the main meals provided to children each day. Dietary requirements were accommodated. The service provides breakfast, snacks and the main meal to children attending on a full day care basis. At mid-day the cook served the main meal which consisted of sweet and sour chicken and rice. A choice of water or milk was offered to the children. Second helpings of dinner were made available to children who required extra portions. Potable water was available to children to self-serve in the pre-school rooms as required.

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 to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within. Access is gained through a bell and coded system at the main entrance door. The inspectors signed the visitors book on arrival. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment and toys and equipment. Safety checklists were available and reviewed.

Infection Control:

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. Soothers were stored correctly in individual containers in the baby room.

Toys and equipment were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available for review. The temperature of the water at the wash hand basins was recorded at approximately 32 degrees Celsius.

Windows were open to allow for natural ventilation in the pre-school rooms and sanitary accommodation.

Refrigerators were available in each room for the storage of perishable good. A record of the fridge temperature was maintained.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and was stored safely in the service.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted on a sleep log for children attending the baby and wobbler rooms. Staff were observed to carry out a visual check every ten minutes on sleeping children. The baby sleep room temperature was recorded 18.6 degrees Celsius. A digital thermometer was noted in the baby sleep room. An air conditioning unit was in place in the baby sleep room. A fan was in place in the wobbler sleep room. The temperature of the wobbler sleep room was recorded at 21.2 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed in the service and a fire assembly point was in place to the front of the building.

Outing:

The designated person in charge stated that outings are not undertaken by the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A gap was noted in the wet pore surface near the wobbler room exit which posed a potential slip or trip hazard to a young child.
2. The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one of the staff members was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

Infection Control:

3. A hand towel dispenser was not in place in the nappy changing area of the wobbler sanitary accommodation. Staff were observed to handle the roll of paper towel which was ineffective for infection control purposes.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Tile was replaced that caused a gap in wet pour surface near wobbler room exit. Safety check has been added to our risk assessment checklist for staff to review daily.
2. Garda vetting applied for the staff member. Excel sheet has been created including staff name and date of expiry for GV (3yrs) which will work as a reminder to re-apply for GV to comply with 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'

Infection Control:

3. Hand towel dispenser has been installed in the wobbler sanitary area for use of adults.

Note has been made to the company overlooking hygiene dispensers that all sinks in the building must have a hand towel dispenser nearby.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph of fixed tile.

Infection control:

Hand towel holder.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector addressed the non-compliance.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)
The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a nominated staff member.

(3)(a)
All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) has to be approved by a staff member.

(b)
A visitor log was in place to record the details and purpose of all visitors to the service.

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)
Six adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and were available on the premises during the hours of operation on a rostered basis.

(2)(a)
A fully equipped first aid box was readily available in the service.

(b)
A first aid box was accessible to the adults caring for the children in the pre-school 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 firefighting 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 for the completed fire drills was available on the premises.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced on the 5 March 2025 and 20 June 2025 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Monthly fire drills were not held in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 6 May 2025.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Fire drill took place on 17 July 2025.

Monthly reminder for fire drills has been scheduled in our calendar.

Supporting documentation submitted

Fire drill.

Summary Comment

Evidence submitted and reviewed by the Early Years Inspector addressed the non compliance.

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 for the number of children attending the service. The expiry date noted was 27 March 2026.