

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015TY010				
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Sparks Montessori School				
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Tower Hill, Borrisokane, Tipperary				
<b>Eircode:</b>	E45 PF98				
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Lavinia Read				
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional				
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	23 February 2023				
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>16</td> <td>PM</td> <td>4</td> </tr> </table>	AM	16	PM	4
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Tipperary				
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	L McGeeney				
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

This sessional and part-time service was established in 2011 to provide care and education to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. The service operates Monday – Friday, 9am – 2pm. A three-hour session, funded under the early childhood care and education scheme (ECCE) for eligible children, operates from 9.15am – 12.15pm, Monday – Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

### Staffing

The registered provider and three staff work directly with the children in the service. All of the staff hold recognised qualifications in early childhood care and development at levels 6, 7 or 8 on the national framework of qualifications. Two of the staff are funded under the access and inclusion model (AIM) which supports a very favourable adult to child ratio within 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/ safety/ premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 20, 21, 22, 24, 25, 26, 28, 29 and 30.

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

*(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

All staff files were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

(2)(a) Written, validated references from past employers were available in respect of all staff.

(b) Not applicable as all available references were from past employers.

(c) Garda vetting had been carried out in respect of all staff and relevant documents were held on file.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff had lived outside the State.

(4) The staff held recognised qualifications in early childhood care and education at levels 6, 7 or 8 on the national framework of qualifications.

### 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.*

*(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

*(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 4 staff working directly with 16 children aged between 2.5 and 6 years old throughout the morning session. On the day of inspection there were 4 children attending on a part-time basis. Two staff stayed on until 2pm to care for these children.

(4) The adult to child ratio was maintained at 1 adult to 4 children throughout the morning, which was greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11 for the morning session or 1:8 for the part-time service.

(8)(a) There were at least two staff present in the service at all times while it was in operation.

### 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) The children had access to a large activity room in the main building and a sensory room that was accessed from the outdoor play area. The main activity room was a large, bright, rectangular space that was divided into interest areas by the use of furniture and open storage shelves. Interest areas included a cosy area, Montessori and practical life area, small world areas, construction areas, a special interest area on the tuff tray table, art and craft area, home corner and puzzles area. Tables and chairs were moved around according to need during the day, for example, two rectangular tables were placed together for the morning activity of making playdough and working with it, then six of the tables were put together to make a dining table for lunchtime. Tables were also moved to the sides of the room to create space for indoor physical activities such as dance classes and yoga.

(b) There was a cosy area in one corner, enclosed by a low-level castle wall and entrance arch, where the children enjoyed going to rest and relax during the day on the floor mat and cushions. There was also three child sized floor beds that could be used by a child who wanted to sleep during the day. Staff monitored children while they slept and maintained sleep records.

(3)(a) The children had daily access to the outdoor play area that was located at the back and side of the premises. The area to the back of the service had a grass surface and a covered area with a gravel surface. The area to the side of the premises had a soft fall surface. The sensory room was located in the area to the side of the service.

## 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 service was well equipped with toys, equipment and materials suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service as well as the staff working in the service.

There were staff and children’s wooden chairs and tables throughout the room. Open shelving units contained a wide range and large quantity of good quality and well-maintained toys, games and materials for the children to engage with. The sensory room was equipped with a wide variety of specialised materials that supported the children’s learning and exploration through their senses including sound, light and tactile materials as well as soft shapes to sit, roll and lie on.

The outdoor play area contained several fixed units such as the pirate ship lookout, basket swing set, climbing frame with slide, balance bridge, playhouse, wall mounted blackboard with chalks, wooden boat, and tyre bouncing unit. Other materials were mobile and included a caterpillar tunnel, fairy houses, picnic tables and benches, ride on toys, fuel pumps, push toys, balls and a replica of a medieval skittles game.

## 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 service had a healthy eating policy. The children brought packed lunches and snacks that were stored in a large fridge in the activity room. The children ate lunch together at 11am around a large table, created by placing six rectangular tables together. Foods eaten included: sandwiches, rolls, croissants, bread sticks, pasta, fromage frais, rice cakes, crackers, yoghurt and fruit (apples and bananas) with drinks of water and squash.

The children who attended on a part-time basis brought extra food to eat in the afternoon.

Children’s birthdays were celebrated with a birthday cake supplied by the child’s parent/guardian.

## 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)(a) A record was maintained of the arrival and departure times of all children. Parents signed their children in and out at the entrance door and staff maintained the attendance register.

(3)(a) Staff greeted all visitors at the entrance door, which was separated from the activity room by an entrance lobby. Staff ensured that only those persons permitted to enter the service were given admittance while the service was in operation. A sign in/sign out book was available and staff requested that visitors to the service use it, including the early years inspector.

## 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) Three staff held current certification in first aid response (FAR).

(2)(a) There was a large, well-stocked first aid box available in the kitchen.

(b) The first aid box was available if required by a child 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 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service. The last fire drill was carried out on 17 February 2023.

(b) There was a written record of the number type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. The firefighting equipment was last serviced on 15 December 2022. The wired smoke alarm system had a new control panel installed and commissioned on 2 February 2023, at which time the smoke alarm was serviced. The smoke alarm system included the sensory room as well as the main premises.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall 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 current insurance cover for up to 24 children attending the service at any one time, valid until 27 March 2023.

### Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

#### Regulation 29 - Premises

*A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-*

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

#### Compliance Information

(a) The service comprised of two premises: the main building with large activity room, kitchen, office and sanitary accommodation areas and a separate sensory room. The main building was constructed of concrete blocks and plaster. The sensory room was a prefabricated timber building. Both appeared to be of sound and stable structure.

(b) The service was safe and secure. Access to the service was through the front door of the main building which was kept secured. Staff managed all entry and exit into and out of the premises. There were fences and gates between the outdoor play area and the front of the premises which were kept secured. There was a metal fence and gate across the front of the premises to prevent the children gaining access to the main road in front of the service without supervision.

There were keypad locks on the office and kitchen to prevent the children from accessing potentially unsafe areas.

(c) The main activity room was well lit by natural light through large windows and glass panelled doors, supplemented by artificial light when required.

The sensory room had windows for natural light as well as electric ceiling lights. The light in this room was kept dimmed to create a calm environment and for better use of lighting effects such as the light changing sand table. The main building was heated via wall mounted radiators as part of the oil-fired central heating system. The sensory room was heated by wall mounted electric radiators. Heated surfaces were thermostatically controlled not to exceed 50°C.

The windows in the premises were openable to provide natural ventilation including in the kitchen, office and sanitary accommodation areas.

(d) The service, toys, equipment and materials were well maintained and clean. The staff practiced 'clean as you go' of surfaces such as the tables and floors. A cordless stick style vacuum cleaner was recently purchased for the service to aid fast and effective cleaning of the floors between activities. For example, on the day of inspection the floor around the table used for the playdough activity was covered with flour and bits of playdough. The staff cleaned this up quickly between the end of the activity and setting up for lunch time. There was a documented cleaning schedule and cleaning sheets which were signed when tasks were completed.

There were two lidded bins in the main activity room, one for rubbish and the other for recyclable materials.

(e) There were three toilets and wash hand basins in the service for the staff and children's use. There was sufficient sanitary accommodation for up to 8 staff and 22 children who were toilet trained. There was also a nappy changing unit in the staff sanitary accommodation area, which provided sufficient accommodation for up to 11 children who were not yet toilet trained. On the day of the inspection there were 12 children who were toilet trained and 4 children who were not.

## Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

### Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

*(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.*

*(4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*

*(a) a sessional pre-school service, and*

*(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both,*

*the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).*

### Compliance Information

(1) The main room measured 59m<sup>2</sup> and the sensory room measured 20m<sup>2</sup>. The storage units and furniture were all mobile therefore there was 79m<sup>2</sup> of clear floorspace available in the service. The service was registered to accommodate up to 22 children on a sessional or part time basis. There was sufficient space for this number of children.

(4) The space requirement for 22 children attending the morning session was 1.818m<sup>2</sup> per child or 40m<sup>2</sup>. In the afternoon, the measurement per child increased to 2.3m<sup>2</sup> per child or 50.6m<sup>2</sup>. There was sufficient space available to the children attending the service.