

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015TY089
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Name of Service:	Bright Star Montessori and Afterschool
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Address of Service:	Gaile National School, Gaile, Holycross, Thurles, Co Tipperary
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Eircode:	E41 RX65
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Name of Registered Provider:	Sheila Ryan
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/10/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	12	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Glenmorgan Building, Ferryhouse, Clonmel, Co Tipperary E91RF38
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Inspection undertaken by:	Antoinette McNamara
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Bright Star Montessori and Afterschool is a community-based service. The service provides sessional and part time early learning and care for children aged 2 to 6 years old, 38 weeks per year from 09:15 to 14:15. Children attending can avail of the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service is located on the grounds of Gaile National School in rural Tipperary. Accommodation includes a classroom, sanitary accommodation, storage, kitchenette and a dedicated secure outdoor area. A school age service is also available.

Staffing

The registered provider and one other staff member are employed in the service. Staff working directly with children held qualifications at level 7 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 9 (1)(a)(b)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d)(4) Management and recruitment,

Regulation 11(1)(2) Staffing levels,

Regulation 15 (1) (a-i) (3) Records in relation to a pre-school child,

Regulation 21 Equipment and materials

Regulation 23 Safeguarding health, safety, and welfare of the child,
Regulation 25 (1)(2)(a)(b) First aid,
Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b)(4) Fire safety and
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 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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The registered provided was the person in charge. A named deputy person in charge who was able to deputise, as required.

(b) The registered provider was present for the inspection and is present daily.

The staff files for two staff were reviewed on the day.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references were available for each staff member working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not available, there were references from sources such as previous schools and colleges.

(c) Garda vetting was available on file for each staff member working in the service. Garda vetting had been renewed, in compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable. Review of the curriculum vitae indicated that police vetting was not required.

(4) Certificates of qualifications for the staff working with children were available on file demonstrating that they held a qualification at level 7 and above 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.

(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) There were adequate staffing levels to respond to the children’s needs on the day of inspection.

(2) The adult child ratios during the day of inspection were above the minimum regulatory requirements. There were 2 adults working with 12 children.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and
- (c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

A sample of 10 completed registration forms were reviewed as part of the inspection process:

- (1) The registration forms contained the required information as detailed under parts (a) to (i) of this regulation.
- (3) The registration forms were available on the premises for inspection by an authorised person.

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 environment in the service was comfortable and inviting. The walls were painted with bright colours and murals. Children were given the opportunity for messy play. The children were observed to play with kinetic sand. There was a low-level sink in the classroom which was used for water play. There was also an indoor sand table for the children to play with. There were different areas of interest provided in the classroom. A variety of defined areas of interest were provided for the children to play with. These areas were well developed with a wide range of materials. These included a kitchen area, a beauty salon, a farm table, a library area, and craft area. Low-level shelving provided children with access to a wide selection of activities such as jigsaws and Montessori work. Children's autumn artwork was displayed on the walls of the service. The walls were also decorated with a world map, the seasons and the alphabet. There was space for floor play and an inviting cosy corner available to the children. The service had appropriately sized tables and chairs for the children. The service had personalised coat hooks for each child attending the service. There were additional resources for the rotation of materials in the classroom. Children's identity and belonging was fostered through a birthday wall.

The outdoor space consisted of an enclosed play area with a soft fall area. There was a covered outdoor space which allowed for outdoor play throughout the year. Children's gross motor development was supported through access to games, wheeled toys, a slide and rockers. Additional resources were available in the storage shed. The service also has use of the larger school play area.

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 main door to the premises was locked and needed to be opened from the inside. Staff were required to answer a call bell system to grant access to the preschool area, therefore children could not exit the service unsupervised and unsupervised visitors could not enter. The kitchen was inaccessible to children. Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children. Radiator covers and pinch protectors were present in the service to prevent injury to children. There was soft fall matting present in the playground. The outdoor area was secure to prevent children leaving unsupervised.

Infection control:

There were designated children's toilets available, which contained an adequate number of toilets and sinks for the children attending the service. Hand washing facilities were adequately stocked with paper hand towels and soap. There was warm running water in the service. Hand washing steps were displayed in the toilets. Children were observed to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after using the toilet. Pedal bins were in operation in the service to prevent cross contamination. Hand sanitizer was available for use There was also a sink in the classroom. Perishable foods were stored in the fridge.

Fire safety:

Fire exits were found to be unobstructed on the day of inspection.

There were fire evacuation procedures displayed in a prominent area within 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) There were staff trained in first aid responder (FAR) available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a) There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position.

(b) The first aid box was available to the children 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 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) There was a written record of the monthly fire drills that took place in the service, most recently on the 26th of September 2025.

(b) There was a written record of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the service. A fire register was maintained for these records and all records associated with fire safety in the service. The firefighting equipment had an annual service in February 2025. The smoke alarm system was also serviced in February 2025.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the wall in each room.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

An in-date insurance certificate was available for inspection to demonstrate that valid insurance was in place.