

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH058			
Name of Service:	Bright Beginnings			
Address of Service:	Rathconnell, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath			
Eircode:	N91 RRP3			
Name of Registered Provider:	Charmaine Quinn, Kelly Murtagh			
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional			
Date of Inspection:	31/10/2024			
No of pre-school children:	AM	38	PM	38
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.			
Inspection undertaken by:	K. Murphy			
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.			

Description of service

The service is registered as a full day care service to accommodate children aged 1 to 6 years of age. The service is operated by independent providers. The Early Years' Service is located on the ground floor of a two-storey adapted domestic premises. Four pre-school rooms, a sleep room, a staff room, an office area and a kitchen are provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear and side of the premises. Onsite parking and set down facilities are available. The service is situated in a rural area on the outskirts of the town of Mullingar, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered providers and six other adults were present and working directly with children during the inspection. One of the adults was present in a combined cook/ childcare role.

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 co-operation of the registered providers, 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 service submitted a change in circumstance to the TUSLA registration office noting a change of the age profile, hours of operation and the telephone number of the service. The change in circumstance was accepted by the registration office on the 19 July 2023.

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.

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

(b)

The registered providers were both present during the inspection.

Ten files including the registered providers were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2) (a)(b)

Validated written references from past employers or a source other than a previous employer were available in respect of all adults.

- (c)
Completed Garda Vetting disclosure was available in of all adults. In respect of nine out of ten files reviewed the service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.
- (d)
Police Vetting was available in respect of one adult who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
All adults working directly with children held a major award at levels 5 and 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed to be equivalent.

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-eight children attending the service supervised directly by eight adults.

(8)(a)

The staff roster indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;
- (c) details of the adult: child ratios in the service;
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;
- (e) the facilities available;
- (f) the opening hours and fees;
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)

The service kept and maintained written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16 (1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k).

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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including self-feeding, self-toileting and caring for their belongings. Children were observed to sleep on an individual need's basis. There was good communication observed between the adult and child during nappy changing. Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. The children were encouraged to be independent, and their choices were supported. Details relating to each child's daily activities including feeding, sleeping, nappy changing, events and activities was available on a daily report form. A verbal handover was provided by the child's carer to parents at collection time. A social media platform is used to provide parents with updates relating to the care room their child is attending. The pre-school rooms were equipped with low level tables and chairs. A range of play experiences were available for all children. Play equipment and materials were accessible to children and individual preferences were accommodated as to what and how long children wish to engage with specific chosen activities.

Children's artwork was noted in the pre-school rooms. Children enjoyed moving freely from one play experience to the next in the pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area.

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 and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

A separate sleep room equipped with four cots was available in the service. Low level beds were available in the service for any child over the age of two years who required rest or sleep. Soft furnishings were provided in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax.

(3)(a)

Three outdoor play areas were available to the rear and side of the service. Natural grass, paving stone and mulch surface areas were in place. Concrete, metal, wire and wooden fences secured the perimeter of the outdoor areas. The areas were equipped with a variety of bikes, trikes, swings and climb/slide units as well as a crawl tunnel, a tyre swing, an elevated playhouse, a dig area and a “bus scoile” to support physical and imaginative play.

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 entry to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within.

Infection Control:

There was an adequate supply of paper hand towel and liquid soap in the sanitary accommodation. Warm water was noted at the wash hand basins. Hand washing was facilitated before snack time and after self-toileting. The sanitary accommodation was ventilated by means of openable windows.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available if required by a child with a high temperature. Individual care plans were in place in respect of children with defined medical conditions.

Safe Sleep:

A sleep log was in place indicating that the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was monitored every ten minutes by a nominated staff member. The temperature of the sleep room was also monitored and recorded.

Fire Safety:

The fire exit routes in the premises were unobstructed.

Outing:

On 31 October 2024 the children and staff went on a short outing from the premises. A risk assessment and checklist were completed in respect of the outing and available for review.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The most recent Garda vetting disclosure presented in respect of one staff member was not dated within the previous three years in adherence with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.

2. In pre-school room one a screw was protruding from the cistern in the toilet located to the left.
3. In the toddler room and pre-school room two the stereo cords required securing.
4. In pre-school room two the press containing mouse traps required securing.
5. The old metal hinges on the nappy changing unit in the sanitary accommodation attached to pre-school room two required removal as they had not been removed when the hinges were changed and posed a potential injury risk.
6. Nonslip backing was required for the floor mats in pre-school room two to minimise any risk of slips or trips.

Infection Control:

1. In the sanitary accommodation located in the main entrance hall a hands-free bin for the hygienic disposal of soiled nappies was not available.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered providers stated in the response that:

1. We have applied for an up-to-date Garda vetting of staff member keep a constant check on staff files. Have a checklist easily accessible with renewal dates for each staff member. (document included)
2. The screw has been fixed back into place on the cistern. Ensure that all appliances are checked regularly for any possible risks. (photograph included)
3. Clips are now applied to secure stereo wires to the wall and check that wires are always secured to the walls and replace when required. (photograph included)
4. Press door locks are now in place in preschool two room check regularly and replaced as required. This has been assigned to the core staff member in that room. (photograph included)
5. The hinge was removed from the changing unit and if changing hinges again make sure to remove old ones at the same time. Keep a check on unit for obvious wear and tear. (photograph included)
6. Nonslip backing put under the mat in pre-school room two and ensure all mats have a non-slip backing. (photograph included)

Infection Control:

Corrective & Preventive Action

The registered providers stated in the response that:

1. A new hands-free bin for disposal of nappies has been purchased to ensure that best practice and guidance is followed. (photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

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)
Five adults were qualified in first aid response (FAR). The roster indicated that FAR cover was provided during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in a prominent location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was readily available to 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)

There was a record of fire drills carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on 11 September 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced in April 2024. The smoke alarms were serviced in July 2024.

(4)

Fire evacuation procedures were noted in conspicuous locations in the premises.

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 and the expiry date noted was 27 March 2025.

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 main premises which have been in existence for several years visually appears to be of sound and stable structure.
- (b)
The main door to the pre-school service secured by a locked door and bell access.
- (e)
All sanitary accommodation was stocked with a sufficient supply of liquid soap and paper hand towel. All wash hand basins were plumbed with an instantaneous supply of hot and cold water.

Non-Compliance Information

- (c)
 1. The window in the toddler room required repair to enable it to be openable. The push action piece was missing on the left window, and the handle was not secure on the right window. The window seal was coming away from the window.
- (d)
 7. A radiator cover was required for the hallway outside the toddler room.
 8. The foot operated pedal bin in pre-school room two required replacement as the pedal operation was not functioning.
 9. The vent in the wall in the lobby attached to pre-school room two required replacement as a piece was missing.
 10. The lid of the foot operated bin in the sanitary accommodation located in the main entrance hall was broken and required replacement.

11. The flush operation of the toilet located to the left in the in the sanitary accommodation located in the main entrance hall was not functioning.
12. A build-up of dust and physical debris was noted around the windows in the sanitary accommodation located in the main entrance hall which required cleaning.
13. The drain located externally and outside pre-school room two was overflowing and required maintenance to ensure appropriate functioning.
14. The hole in the wall where the radiator in the sanitary accommodation was located in the main entrance hall required repair.
15. The nappy changing mat in the sanitary accommodation located in the main entrance hall was torn and required replacement.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (c)
1. The registered providers stated in the response that the wobbler room window handles, and seal have been replaced. (photograph included)
- (d)
1. The registered providers stated in the response that a radiator cover was purchased for the radiator outside the wobbler room and that they would ensure that all radiators are covered. (photograph included)
 2. The registered providers stated in the response that a new foot operated pedal bin was purchased for preschool two and they would keep regular maintenance checks. (photograph included)
 3. The registered providers stated in the response that a new vent was put in place in the lobby and the old one removed and they would keep regular maintenance checks. (photograph included)
 4. The registered providers stated in the response that the bin in the sanitary area off the main hall has been replaced and they would keep regular maintenance checks. (photograph included)
 5. The registered providers stated in the response that the toilet on the left in the sanitary area off the main hall is now flushing appropriately and they would keep regular maintenance checks. (photograph included)
 6. The registered providers stated in the response that the windowsill area was washed and is now free of any dust or debris and they would make sure cleaning is up to standard and checked regularly. (photograph included)

7. The registered providers stated in the response that drains were cleaned out and covers placed over to reduce what goes in and will reduce further blockages and will ensure that the drains are cleaned regularly. (photograph included)
8. The registered providers stated in the response that the hole in the wall has been repaired and they would keep regular maintenance checks. (photograph included)
9. The registered providers stated in the response that the nappy changing mat has been replaced. (photograph included)

Summary Comment

In respect of the corrective action taken photographic evidence was submitted to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate, reviewed by the Early Years Inspector and deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(2)

A review of the space per child attending the wobbler room was carried out in respect of the corrective action and preventive actions submitted following the last inspection of 23 June 2023. Measurements of the wobbler room recorded, and the number of children present on inspection indicated that there was sufficient space per child available in the wobbler room.

Age of Child	Space Required	Total Space Required
1 – 2 years	5 Full Day Care/ Part-time (2.8 m2)	14 m2
Total Space Required		14 m2
Total Space Available		18.209 m2