

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

**TUSLA Identifier:** TU2017DL501

**Name of Service:** Bright Beginnings Pre-School

**Address of Service:** Unit 1, Carndonagh Business Park, Off Station Road, Carndonagh, Co. Donegal

**Eircode:**

**Name of Registered Provider:** Denise Moore, Sue Porter

**Service type:** Sessional

**Date of Inspection:** 17/06/2025

**No of pre-school children:** AM 19 PM -

**Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:** Donegal Early Years Inspectorate, St. Conal's Campus, Letterkenny, Co. Donegal. F92 TD92

**Inspection undertaken by:** L Mc Glynn

**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

Bright Beginnings preschool is located in a small business park within the large town of Carndonagh in north Donegal. The service provides a morning sessional service from 9.00am to 12.00pm and an afternoon session from 12.30pm to 3.30pm for children aged 2-6 years.

The service is operated from a unit within the business park which comprises of one large playroom with adjoining office, sanitary and storage facilities. A small enclosed outdoor play area is available to the side of the building and is accessible from the care room.

### Staffing

There are five staff members working in the service which includes the two registered providers who co-manage the daily operation of the service. Both registered providers were present and working with children on the day of inspection.

### 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. 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 cooperation of the registered providers, 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

(2) The vetting files of all five staff members were reviewed as part of this inspection and the following was deemed to meet the regulatory requirement.

- (a) There were two written and validated past employer references on file for four staff members.
- (b) One reference from a source other than a past employer was on file for one staff member.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(4) Evidence of completion of a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent was on file for four staff members. A letter of temporary qualification recognition was on file for one staff member valid until 01 September 2025.

### Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a) There was no second reference on file for one staff member on the day of inspection. It is acknowledged that the reference was submitted to the inspectorate the following day, however it had not been validated by the service.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### **Corrective and Preventive Action**

(2) (a) The reference was validated and evidence submitted. Management will regularly review the staff files to ensure they are compliant.

#### **Supporting documentation submitted**

A copy of a validated reference was submitted.

### Summary Comment

The actions taken by the registered provider adequately address the non-compliance identified on inspection.

### 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.*
- (3) Subject to paragraph (5), a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 2 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) therefore at that reference number is satisfied.*

#### Compliance Information

- (1) A review of staff and children's attendance records demonstrated that there were an adequate number of adults rostered to be working with the children at all times.
- (3) On the morning of inspection there were three adults working directly with 19 children aged 3-5 years attending the service on a sessional basis.

### 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 19 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.*
- (2) A registered provider-*
- (a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or*
  - (b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,*
- shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.*

### Compliance Information

(1) (a) The preschool room was bright and spacious with a range of developmentally appropriate play materials divided into a range of interest areas with space for children to move freely between. Each interest area was well resourced to maximise the learning opportunities for children with supporting materials. The interest areas included arts and crafts, painting, construction, small world items, dress up props, a play kitchen/home area, play dough tables, problem solving toys, a farm table and wide range of manipulate play resources. Additional play resources were available in storage. Open low level shelving units enabled all items to be readily accessible to the children and suitable sized tables and chairs were available for tabletop activities.

The outdoor area was accessible from the preschool room and contained decorative artificial grass ground cover with inlaid coloured pathway throughout. The fencing surrounding the area was used to create play spaces for children with a child height abacus and chime pipes unit mounted on it. Small plastic buckets also mounted on the fence contained a range of supporting play materials to use in the nearby sand try and mud kitchen including kitchen items, spades and small shape makers. A large wooden trellis arch with integrated planting provided a natural interest feature and a playhouse stored large plastic blocks which provided imagery and construction play opportunities for children.

(b) Soft, comfortable furnishings were available in the bay window which included low level seating and cushions to facilitate rest or relaxation.

(2) (a) (b) The outdoor play area was available and accessible at all times to the children attending the service.

### 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.*

*(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.*

### Compliance Information

(1) There was a roll book in the service where staff recorded the arrival and departure time of children each day. Staff members also recorded their attendance in the book. A review of the previous two weeks demonstrated that accurate arrival and departure time were recorded for each child.

(3) (a) (b) (4) The inspector was requested to sign the visitor book on arrival to the service and a review of same demonstrated that records of all visitors were maintained dating back to the previous year.

## 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) Documentation presented on inspection demonstrated that all five staff members held in-date training in first aid for children.

(2) (a) The first aid box was stored in the kitchen area. Evidence of additional stock added to the first aid box was submitted to the inspectorate immediately after the inspection.

(b) The box was readily accessible if required.

### 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) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate monthly fire drills taking place in the service, the last one recorded in June 2025.
- (b) Maintenance records for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. The fire-fighting equipment was last serviced in September 2024 and the smoke alarm in May 2025.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to follow in the event of a fire was on display at both exit doors in the room.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 27 – Supervision

*A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.*

#### Compliance Information

The correct adult to child ratio was maintained in line with the requirements of the regulations and staff members were observed to appropriately supervise children at all times throughout the inspection. It was observed that staff supervised mainly by sight, except for occasions where children independently used the sanitary facilities. In these cases, staff remained close by and communicated verbally with the children. Staff were vigilant to children's location in the room during free play and positioned themselves at areas of high activity where groups had come together. This was also evident when children were eating with staff members remaining close by to provide assistance where required. One staff member positioned themselves at the exit during collection time and ensured children exited the service safely.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The service was adequately insured to provide sessional care for up to 22 children. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27 March 2026.