

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2017KE506
--------------------------	-------------

<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Beginnings
-------------------------	-------------------

<b>Address of Service:</b>	St. Brigid's Primary School, Kildare Town, Co. Kildare
----------------------------	--

<b>Eircode:</b>	R51XY30
-----------------	---------

<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Audrey Lynch
-------------------------------------	--------------

<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional
----------------------	----------------------

<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	20/11/2024
-------------------------------	------------

<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	48	PM	16
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child and Family Agency, Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co. Kildare, W91 X38W
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	E. Mulhern
<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
---------------------------------	----------------

### Description of service

Bright Beginnings is one of three early years services, privately operated by the registered provider. The service operates from two prefabricated buildings on the grounds of St Brigid's Primary School in Kildare town. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme from 8:45am to 11:45am, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks per year. An option is provided for children to attend part-time until 1:45pm.

Children are allocated to one of three rooms according to their age and stage of development. Children who attend on a part-time basis are accommodated together in one room when the morning session ends. A school-aged service is provided in the afternoon. Learning is facilitated through a play-based curriculum. An outdoor area is located at the side and rear of one of the buildings. Children also have use of the school yard.

### Staffing

There are 10 staff members employed to work in the service including the person in charge, a relief worker and a person who works with school-aged children. Eight staff members were working directly with the pre-school 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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

- Regulation 9 (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) - Management and recruitment.
- Regulation 11(1),(2) – Staffing Levels.
- Regulation 19 (1)(a) – Health, welfare and development of child.
- Regulations 23 – Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child
- Regulation 25 (1), (2)(a)(b) – First aid.
- Regulation 26 (1), (4) - Fire safety measures
- Regulation 27 – Supervision

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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 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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise in their absence.
  - (b) There was a designated person in charge and a named person who could deputise on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) & (b) A minimum of two references had been sourced from past employers or from another source where adults had only one or no previous employers. The references had a record of verification checks carried out.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults. Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in accordance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, which requires services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting disclosures were available for all adults for whom this was required.

(4) All staff members employed to work directly with pre-school children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum Level 5 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the Minister.

### 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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children throughout the inspection. There were 8 staff members allocated to work directly with 48 children.

(2) The minimum adult to child ratio requirement was maintained in accordance with the ages and type of service delivered.

(8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises throughout the inspection. The staff roster provided for a minimum of two adults to be present at all times of opening.

## 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, and*

### Compliance Information

#### Basic Needs

The children's basic needs were met. They moved freely within the preschool rooms. They always had access to drinks. A rolling snack time was provided where they could sit together and eat at their preferred time. They brought nutritious food from home in accordance with the services healthy eating policy. Children who stayed for the part-time service were provided with a second opportunity to eat. The children used the toilet independently when they needed, with staff nearby to assist if required. Staff reminded and assisted children with wiping their noses when needed with attention to handwashing afterwards.

#### Supporting Relationships around Children

The service fostered positive relationships with children by offering support through responsive interactions, attentive listening and gentle guidance. They were observed responding appropriately to children's cues, comforting children when they became upset. Group activities, such as shared meals and cooperative play, were designed to develop communication skills, strengthen social bonds and help children build friendships. Pictures of children's families were displayed at children's eye-level. Staff discussed maintaining connections with families by providing support through phone calls and meetings when needed to support children's emotional and social development.

#### Physical and Material Environment

The rooms were laid out with open shelves which displayed a variety of materials, including fine motor equipment such as blocks and puzzles. These were within easy reach of the children, promoting child-led choice and decision-making. Low level tables and chairs were available for meals and table-top activities. There were designated interest areas including home corners, sensory areas, mark-making zones, construction areas and dress-up areas in all rooms. These were appropriately resourced with equipment and props to support imaginative and creative

play. Each room had a designated rest area with soft matting and chairs where children could take a break from activities or rest. A small library was located next to each of the seating areas with books appropriate to the age and stages of the children.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

*(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, 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

A suitable and secure outdoor area was not available to the children as follows.

1. The designated outdoor area was not available to the children. Staff reported this was because the grass was overgrown and wet, and the children did not have suitable outdoor clothing or footwear. The school yard was used for outdoor play. However, there were no natural elements, areas of interest, equipment or materials provided in this area to support the children's play, learning and development.
2. The designated outdoor area and school yard were not secured. The designated outdoor area had large, unfenced sections on three sides. The school yard had a large, unfenced section on one side. These unfenced sections led to extensive school grounds including the school car park, posing a risk of injury if a child left unsupervised.

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

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

1. Equipment and materials are available to the children in the designated outdoor areas (grass area and playground area). Conversations have been had with Educators to ensure that play equipment is brought out at the designated play time each day. The service management has spoken with the school management regarding having the grass cut more frequently and the service is awaiting installation of a

fence in the grassed area. All parents / guardians were advised that wet gear and wellies are required for children. Wet gear and wellies will be brought in for all children at the start of term each year.

2. The designated outdoor green area has hedging around it. Management have proposed to the primary school board the installation of a fence around the three unfenced sides. It may be January 2025 before approval is given. This green area is not in use until the fence is in place. Temporary moveable fencing is now in place when children are in the school yard. This fencing is portable and can be moved in and out of place as required. When in place, fencing will be checked daily in the service's daily risk assessments / maintenance sheets. The green area will then be shared between the three classes, one class at a time is allocated outside of this time.

### **Supporting documentation submitted**

Photographic images and documents were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

### **Summary Comment**

The actions have been deemed appropriate in addressing the non-compliance. The actions will be assessed in practice on the next inspection.

## 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:

Measures had been taken to safeguard the children. The entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access. Cleaning products and cables were kept out children's reach. Heavy furniture was secured to prevent tipping. Emergency exits were kept clear to allow for timely evacuation in the event of a fire and staff members demonstrated an awareness of fire evacuation procedures.

##### Infection Control:

Measures were taken to minimise the risk of infection spreading. Sanitary facilities were equipped to support handwashing, and staff guided children to wash their hands after toileting, nose-wiping and before meals. The premises was clean with waste properly managed using pedal-operated bins, ensuring hands-free disposal. Staff displayed an understanding of the required exclusion criteria for children showing signs of contagious illness.

##### Administration of Medication:

The staff reported that none of the children in attendance required medication. Staff demonstrated a clear understanding of the procedures to administer medication safely if needed. This included obtaining parental or guardian consent and maintaining accurate records.

##### Outing:

The person in charge reported that the service does not undertake outings.

## Non-Compliance Information

### General Safety:

The three pre-school rooms were not adequately secured to prevent children leaving unsupervised. Each room had a door with a low-push-bar opening which could be opened by a child. These led to the outdoor areas which were not fenced off from the extensive school grounds, including the school car park posing a risk of injury.

## Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

Management will ensure that all doors are secured. Temporary latches have been put in place to ensure children cannot push the doors open. Contact has been made with a fire alarm company to install magnetic lock release mechanisms. These should be fitted in January 2025.

### Supporting documentation submitted

#### General Safety:

Photographic images were submitted in keeping with the actions stated.

## Summary Comment

The actions submitted have been deemed to address the non-compliance. The registered provider must ensure that any locking mechanisms installed are in keeping with fire regulations. The actions will be assessed on the next inspection.

### 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) A person trained in first aid for children was always available.

(2)

(a) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored in a conspicuous position in each building easily accessible to staff.

(b) The first aid boxes were always available for use.

### 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) Records were available of fire drills carried out in the service. The most recent drill recorded was dated 8 October 2024.

(b) Records were available detailing the maintenance of the smoke alarm system dated 7 November 2024 and the firefighting equipment dated 8 May 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the preschool rooms.

## 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 children were appropriately supervised at all times, primarily by staff keeping them in sight.