

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

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| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2019KK002 | | |
| Name of Service: | Bright Horizons Preschool & Afterschool | | |
| Address of Service: | Methodist Church Hall, William Street, Kilkenny, Co. Kilkenny | | |
| Eircode: | R95 W1KV | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Olivia Wall, Lorraine Jordan | | |
| Service type: | Sessional | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 29/01/2025 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 21 | PM N/A |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow. | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | Norma Thornton. | | |
| 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 | n/a | | |

Description of service

Bright Horizons Preschool and After School is a sessional service providing an early childhood care and education (ECCE) service for children aged 2.5 to 6 years between the hours of 08:30 to 12:00, Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year.

The service is in the centre of Kilkenny city and operates from two designated classrooms at the back of the Methodist Church Hall on William Street.

There is a secure designated outdoor space for the children at the front of the building.

Staffing

There were four staff members employed in the service to work directly with the children, including the two registered providers. All four staff held at least a Level 5 qualification in early childhood care and education on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations, 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25, 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15, 19, and 23.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the classroom and outdoor play area.

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

(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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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) There was a designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a second named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was onsite to facilitate the inspection.

(c) The inspector observed that there was a clear management structure in place in the service, on observation of the staff in practice on the day.

The management structure was displayed in the entrance hall of the service to visually inform parents / guardians of each staff member's name, qualifications and role in the service.

(2) Staff files for the four staff members, employed in the service, including the files of the two registered providers, who as part of their role in the service, worked directly with the children, were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

(a)(b) There were two validated references available for each staff member on file, from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were available on file for each of the four staff members employed in the service. The registered providers demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) No staff member employed to work directly with the children had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available in each of the four staff members' files demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification at the minimum level 5 ranging to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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) The registered providers ensured that there was an adequate number of staff working directly with the children in their care.

(3) There were 21 early years children aged 2.5 to 5 years of age, present on the day of inspection, with 3 staff members directly supervising them.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 records of pre-school children registered to attend the service, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each preschool child.

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*
- (b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.*

Compliance Information

On arrival to the service the inspector observed that the children were engaged in free play throughout the two classrooms, moving freely from one to the other of the classrooms. The various areas of interest provided such as the kitchen/home area, shop area and soft restful relaxation areas invited children to choose activities they were attracted to or wanted to join in with their friends playing.

Low-level shelving provided the children with a supply and variety of resources such as kitchen/home play materials, open ended shop materials, dolls, doll equipment, small world people and animal figurines.

Appropriately sized tables and chairs provided children with an environment and space to figure out how to make jigsaws, and to accomplish connective and manipulative tasks.

The staff in the service supported the children's play enjoying the imaginary cups of tea and meals prepared in the kitchen.

Staff were observed to promptly respond to children's cues, not only for support with basic care needs such as toileting or refilling drink containers but also with transitioning into adult led activities such as when they decided with the children to set up playdough tables.

Staff were observed to nurture children respond to any child that required support, observing, waiting and listening to each child as required. As English was not the first language for some of the children in attendance, the inspector observed that the staff were extremely patient in ensuring that they understood children.

Friendships that had been supported and developed between the children in the service were often observed at these times, when children who spoke a common language were able to help the staff understand what a child needed.

Children were observed to understand each other's abilities and were observed being patient and kind to each other.

At break time the children and staff sat together for their snack, enjoying healthy breads, fruit, cold meats, yogurts and drinks of water.

Children explained to the inspector how they decided on rules for their class with help from their teachers.

These rules included taking turns, sharing, being kind and respectful, no running inside, no yelling, using nice manners, listening and cleaning up after oneself.

At the end of the ECCE session the children took time to relax and meditate with the staff, by each switching on a battery operated candle in the darkened classroom and closing their eyes to take time to reflect on the morning activities.

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 premises was secured with a high wooden gate and block wall. Inside the main entrance was secured internally and staff could clearly see through the large front window any persons approaching the service. Staff authorised admission to the service by locking the entrance door internally, therefore reducing the risk of any unauthorised person from entering the premises and assisting to ensure that no child exited the premises unsupervised.

Cleaning materials and equipment were safely stored in a secure area and were inaccessible to the children.

A daily assessment of the outdoor play area was undertaken and recorded daily.

Infection Control:

The inspector observed the children and staff wash their hands frequently after toileting, messy and outdoor play, as well as before snack times. Children were also supported and encouraged by staff to clean their noses and wash their hands after handling soiled tissues.

The sanitary accommodation provided adequate supplies of liquid hand soap, paper towelling and warm running water for effective handwashing.

Administration of Medication:

Staff explained to the inspector that in general medications were not required to be administered during the session, however the staff demonstrated that they were well informed of the service's policy on administration of medications and the procedures to follow, when required to administer various medications.

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) On review of staff files the inspector observed that there were three staff members employed in the service with current first aid responder (FAR) training. Two staff members were rostered to be present daily with the children in attendance in the service.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available stored in each of the classrooms which were always available to the children in attendance in 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(c) an authorised person.

(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) On review of fire drill records maintained, the inspector observed that fire drills were carried out monthly in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 24 January 2025.

(b) Records were also available demonstrating that the firefighting equipment was last serviced in November 2024 and the smoke alarms in the service on the 02 October 2024.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed at the main entrance.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

On review of the service's current insurance certificate, the inspector observed that the insurance certificate detailed cover for a sessional childcare service for 33 children for a sessional service, which was active until the 27 March 2025.