

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2024KY002			
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Bright Stars			
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Scoil Mhuire, Brosna, Tralee, Co. Kerry			
<b>Eircode:</b>	V92 E982			
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Mairead McEnerg			
<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional			
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	12/02/2025			
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	4	PM	n/a
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Department, Child & Family Agency, Hospital Grounds, Coolnagarrane, Skibbereen, Co Cork P81 PD78			
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	M. O Reilly			
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector			
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>				
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>	N/A			

### Description of service

Bright Stars Preschool is a private sessional service which opened on the 28<sup>th</sup> October 2024. While registered to accommodate children aged from 2 – 6 years the service currently caters for children aged from 3 to 5 years. A morning session is available which incorporates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, Monday to Friday, 38 weeks of the year. A school age service is in operation in the afternoon.

The service operates from one classroom which is located at the rear side of Scoil Mhuire National School, in the rural village of Brosna in County Kerry. There are designated children’s toilets and an adult toilet, provided off the main care room. The children have access to a designated secure outdoor yard located beside the service and within the grounds of the national school.

### Staffing

The registered provider operates the service single handedly and works directly with the children. A second nominated person is available in the event of an emergency

### 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 announced 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 cooperation of the person in charge 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 register provider was the designated person in charge and operates the service single handedly. A second qualified person was available in the event of an emergency.
- (b) The registered provider was observed working in the service while the children were on the premises.
- (2) Recruitment files of two adults were reviewed.
- (a) There were no references available from past employers.
- (b) There were validated references available from sources other than past employers.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the two adults which evidenced compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) The curricula vitae of the two adults indicated that no international police vetting was required.
- (4) There was evidence that the two adults working directly with the children had attained a level 6 award in Early Childhood Care and Education 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.*
- (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.*

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

*(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.*

### Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in the classroom on the morning of the inspection.

(3) The adult/child ratio was met at all times. There were four children in attendance with one adult.

(8)

(c) The registered provider supplied documentation evidencing that a second person, living nearby, was available to provide assistance in the event of an emergency.

## 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) The children’s pre-school records that attend were reviewed, all five pre-school records were noted to include the information listed from (a) to (i) above.

(3)

(c) The children’s pre-school records, furnished to the inspector, were available on the premises.

## 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:*

*(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child 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)

(h) A written record of the attendance of each child on a daily basis that included the arrival and departure time from the service was recorded and maintained in the service.

(j) There was a hard copy individual administration of medication record in the service. The registered provider informed the inspectorate, that no medication had been administered to a child while in attendance since the service opened in October 2024.

(k) There was a hard copy individual Accident and Incident record in the service. The registered provider informed the inspectorate there was no accidents or incident to report since the service opened in October 2024. The Accident and Incident template included once signed, a duplicate copy of each accident and incident record for the parent /guardian.

### 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

1(a) On the day of inspection, the following information was obtained through:

- Direct observation and discussion with staff
- Examination of relevant documentation.

#### BASIC NEEDS:

- Children were observed eating mid-morning snack which was noted to consist of filled sandwiches, fruit, vegetables, cheese strings and yogurt. The food provided by the parents and guardians were observed to be healthy and nutritious and appropriate portion size. Individual water bottles were available throughout the morning from an accessible shelf.
- There was a cosy and inviting designated rest/quiet area with soft furnishings including a child sized couch, and two bean bags. Age and stage appropriate books were available from a basket in the area providing opportunities for language development while resting.
- Children's individual needs were accommodated. The person in charge was observed listening to and following the children's requests for toileting and play activities.
- The staff was observed engaging positively with children throughout the morning. During tabletop activities, the staff member was heard praising children's efforts and giving encouragement in relation to each child's chosen activity. Examples included children playing with playdough with accompanying play equipment.
- The staff encouraged communication and language development through discussing topics of interest with the child during conversation and encouraging the child to expand on the discussion on these topics. In a group activity the children were observed singing songs with movement and reciting poems.
- Due to the inclement weather there was no outdoor play on day of inspection.

#### SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Children's individual needs were accommodated with the staff member facilitating children in both individual and group activities.

- Ongoing observations linked to Aistear, the curriculum framework, were furnished to the inspector. These documented the children's interests and development. Activities were child led and children were facilitated to make their own choice in selecting equipment and activities they wished. Examples included children picking the book at story book time.
- Children's behaviour was consistently managed in a positive manner by staff, with an emphasis on positive reinforcement and encouragement.
- The person in charge advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents, with an online application to send pictures/information for the parents. The person in charge informed the Inspectorate that the main communication with parents and guardians was at drop off and collection times.

### **PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:**

- The room was laid out in clearly defined areas with equipment and toys providing play and learning opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. The equipment and toys were located on low-level shelving within easy access of the children, offering choice and encouraging independence.
- Age and stage appropriate tables and chairs were arranged for the children to sit in a group or individually.
- A secure, dedicated, outdoor play area was located at the rear of the service where the children had access to a large concrete yard and a covered area to facilitate outdoor play in all weathers.
- A number of resources providing opportunities for practicing gross motor skills such as cycling, kicking, throwing and sliding were available in the outdoor play area from resources including ride-ones, bicycles, slides and balls. Sensory materials including earth was available for planting and digging

### 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 inspector observed that the main entrance door to the service was secured with a number key pad ensuring that unauthorised adults could not enter the room and ensuring the children could not leave the playroom unsupervised.
- Window openings were located above adult height therefore not accessible by the children, preventing any accidents.
- The perimeter of the outdoor play area was secured with a low concrete wall, high bar metal fencing and the main entrance gate had a sprung metal sliding bolt ensuring children were not able to leave the area unsupervised.
- The blind cords, on the windows in the care room, were secured with hooks and were inaccessible by the children.
- Storage cupboards were anchored ensuring that they could not tip or fall onto a child.
- All electrical flexes were inaccessible in the care room.
- Cleaning agents and adult personal belongings were secure in a cupboard, fitted with a safety latch, under the sink.
- The television in the room was securely mounted with brackets to the wall.

##### Infection Control:

- The sinks in use by the adults and children in the sanitary areas were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, ranging from 32.7°C to 40.5°C, dispensing soap, paper towels.
- Pedal operated bins were available for the disposal of paper waste.
- Handwashing was observed after toileting and prior to mid-morning snack.
- Perishable foods were stored in the fridge preventing the food from spoilage.
- Coats were stored on individual hooks and belongings, including bags, were stored on a shelf, off the floor area.

##### Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not observed to be administered to any of the children. Temperature reducing medication was also noted to be inaccessible to children.

**Fire Safety:**

- Fire exit doors were noted to be maintained free from any obstructions.

**Outing:**

- An outing from the childcare facility did not take place at the time of 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) The proposed registered provider and the emergency person both have valid First Aid Responder (FAR) certificates, with expiry dates recorded as 15 August 2025

(2) (a) (b) The first aid bag was stored on a shelf, easily accessible by the proposed registered provider. The registered provider stated that the first aid bag will be available at all times while the pre-school children are present 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.*
- (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) Written records of the fire drills that took place were furnished to the inspector. The last date recorded was noted as the 06 February 2025 with previous monthly drills recorded on a monthly basis
  - (b) Records were available which indicated that the firefighting fighting equipment had been serviced on 28 August 2024 and the smoke alarms on 30 August 2024.
  - (4) The notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed on the walls of the care room beside the exit door and on wall next to the main fire exit door of the building, opposite the care room. The fire assembly point was identified with a sign in the outdoor play area, a suitable distance from the service.