

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC070
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Childcare Centre
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Address of Service:	Brigown, Mitchelstown, Co Cork
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Eircode:	P67 V678
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Name of Registered Provider:	Claire Devaney
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/05/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	75	PM	53
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate, 13 Market Square, Mallow, Co Cork, P51 DD5Y
Inspection undertaken by:	N O'Donoghue
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).

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Description of service

Bright Sparks Childcare Centre is a privately owned early years service in operation since 2004. The service was purpose built and is located on the outskirts of the town of Mitchelstown in Co Cork. The service offers a sessional, part time and full day care service to children aged 1 to 6 years. The service also offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service operates from 7.30am to 5.30pm, Monday to Friday, 51 weeks of the year. The service has seven care rooms, sanitary facilities, a kitchen, and a staff and reception area. There is a large, secure and well-developed outdoor area to the side and rear of the premises. The service also operates a school age service from a detached residence adjacent to the preschool facility. The service also has a Green Schools flag and the service promotes an environmentally friendly ethos.

Staffing

The service employs 29 staff, including one cook and a service administrator. The registered provider is service based and is able to provide relief cover in the care rooms if required.

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.

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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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

The safeguarding statement has been referred to the Child Safeguarding Statement Unit for assessment and follow up if required.

Acknowledgments

The inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider, person in charge, 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-

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- (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.*

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 deputy person in charge on the premises. In the event the person in charge or deputy person in charge were not on the premises a named person able to deputise was available. This information was outlined on staff rosters.
 - (b) A person in charge or named deputy person in charge were on the premises at all times during the operation of the service. This was evident from reviewing the staff roster from the previous four weeks.
 - (c) There was a clearly identified management structure in the service. This included person in charge, deputy person in charge, room leaders and early years educators.
- (2) Six adults had commenced employment at the service since the previous inspection on 17th February 2025. Recruitment records in respect of these adults were therefore examined. It was also identified that 13 Garda vetting disclosures were due for renewal, these were also open to inspection.
- (a) Of the 12 written and validated references, 9 were available from previous employers.
 - (b) Of the 12 written and validated references, 3 were available from a source other than a previous employer.

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Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults. However, the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in 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 the report.

(d) Police vetting was deemed to be required for one of the adults working in the service and copies of the relevant documents were maintained on file.

(3) The registered provider ensured to carry out all checks and validations mentioned in (9) (2) prior to the adults commencing in the service.

(4) All six of the new staff members who worked directly with the children held a relevant qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education from level 5 to level 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed equivalent by the minister.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

The following policies, procedures and statements were reviewed and contained all necessary information.

- Policy on managing behaviour
- Child Safeguarding Statement
- Infection Control policy
- Staff training policy

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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) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.

(2) On the day of inspection, the adult to child ratios were in adherence to the requirements of the regulation

- In the Shooting Stars in the morning, there were 4 staff working with 17 children aged between 3 and 4 years of age, 11 of these children were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was one staff member working with seven children aged between 3 and 4 years.
- In the Little Acorns in the morning, there was one staff member working with six children aged between 3 and 4 years, all attending full day care. In the afternoon there was one staff member working with six children.
- In the Astronauts room in the morning, there were 3 staff working with 18 children aged between 3 and 5 years, 15 of these children were attending full day care. In the afternoon Jupiter's session, there was one staff member working with eight children.
- In the Flying Saucers room in the morning, there were 2 staff working with 10 children aged between 4 and 5 years, 8 of these children were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was one staff member working with eight children.
- The Caterpillars and Butterflies are located in the one room. In the room in the morning, there was 2 adults working with 10 children aged between 2 and 3 years, all were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was 2 staff members working with 10 children.

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- In the Bugs and Bunnies room in the morning, there were two staff working with nine children aged between 1 year and 5 months and 2 years, all were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there were two staff working with eight children.
- In the Little Stars room in the morning, there were two staff working with five children aged between 3 and 3 years and 6 months, all were attending full day care. In the afternoon, there was one staff member working with six children.

(8)

(a) Review of the staff roster from the four weeks preceding the inspection and observation on the day demonstrated that the service was consistently operated with at least two adults present.

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) Children's enrolment forms were assessed for 12 of the children registered as attending the service. The records inspected had the detail required as listed from (a) to (i).

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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

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic needs:

- Staff were observed sitting on the floor with the babies, engaging in play using blocks and shapes.
- Children had access to their individual, labelled water bottles throughout the day. These were also brought outdoors during outdoor play.
- The service provided hot meals to children attending full day care. Breakfast, dinner and afternoon snacks were prepared onsite by the chef. Additional snacks were also available if children required it.
- Nappy changes were completed at regular intervals and as required. Staff engaged in meaningful conversation during nappy changes, singing songs and giving the child their one-to-one attention. The adults were observed to demonstrate sensitivity towards children during care routines, such as nappy changing and when settling the children to sleep.

Supporting relationships:

- Staff and parents worked in partnership within the service. The service used a software mobile application to provide information to parents in relation to updates on eating, nappy changing, activities and sleep.
- Staff spoke with children at their level, in a calm and relaxed tone. Children were at ease with staff and were comfortable in expressing their feelings and emotions to the staff members.
- Children engaged in parallel play and were observed to check in on their friends and include them in play.
- During mealtime staff sat at the table and engaged in social conversations with the children.

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(3) The inspector did not observe any practices that were disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful towards the children in the service. The staff outlined practices in the service that were prohibited and positive behaviour management strategies.

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 entrance door to the service was secured to prevent unauthorised access by a person or the unsupervised exit of a child.
- The stairs were adequately lit and were fitted with handrails at both the child's height and the adults.
- Flexes and cables were stored out of reach of the children in all care rooms and sleep rooms.
- Toys and equipment assessed were observed to be in good condition.
- The outdoor area was maintained in a good and safe condition.
- The outdoor play areas were secured by concrete block walls, fencing and gates ensuring that unauthorised persons could not access or enter the area or that the children could not exit the areas unsupervised.

Infection control:

- Handwashing routines were observed frequently throughout the day of inspection.
- Children's hands were observed to be washed after nappy changing.
- Perishable foods were stored in the refrigerators.
- Windows were open for natural ventilation.
- Water temperatures were recorded in the sanitary facilities under 43°C.

Administration of medication:

- Medication is stored in each room. Staff were aware of medication available and how to administer the medication in the event of emergency.
- Staff advised the inspector on the process of filling in administration of medication forms and where they are stored on the mobile application device.

Safe sleep:

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- Staff conducted regular 10-minute sleep checks on children sleeping, a staff member was also present at all times while children were sleeping on floor beds.

Fire safety:

- Fire exits were clear of obstruction.
- Fire equipment was observed on both the ground floor and the upper floor of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General safety:

Garda vetting was available for three staff members. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'. On discussion with the registered provider, applications had been submitted in relation to the three staff however up to date disclosures were not on file.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General safety:

The registered provider applied for the three garda vetting's and placed them on file. The registered provider will ensure to submit applications prior to date of expiry.

Supporting documentation submitted

General safety:

Evidence of the three garda vetting disclosures were received by the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The noncompliance identified under Regulation 23 has been adequately addressed.

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,

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(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.

Compliance Information

(1) The person in charge ensured each child was signed in and out of the service throughout the day.

(3) (a) The registered provider ensured that any person other than a child, parent/guardian, employee or unpaid worker could not enter the premises without their entry being approved by an employee.

(b) A daily record in writing was available on the premises of any such person.

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

It was evident throughout the day of inspection that children are supervised at all times, this was observed by staff engaging in supervision by sight and sound. Staff supported children when required. This was observed both indoors and outdoors.