

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE122
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Name of Service:	Bright Sparks Pre-School
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Address of Service:	Ellistown GAA Centre, Ellistown, Co. Kildare
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Eircode:	R51 RX74
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caitriona Gleeson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	02/06/2026
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No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	NA
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Suite 7, Vista Primary Care, Ballymore Eustace Road, Naas, Co Kildare
Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty
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 Preschool is located on the grounds of Ellistown GAA Centre, Co Kildare. It operates from two adjoining rooms in a prefabricated building. The service is registered to provide sessional care for children aged 2 to 6 years. The service operates from 9.15am to 12.15pm Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. The premises includes sanitary facilities and the service has access to an enclosed playground on the grounds or the GAA campus.

Staffing

The registered provider employs three staff members. There were four staff present working directly with the children on the inspector's arrival including the registered provider.

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, information and records, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focussed on the following regulations:

Regulation 9 (1) (a) (b) 2 (a) (b) (c) (d) 4 - Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 (1) (2), (8)(a) - Staffing levels

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to a preschool service

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Regulation 19 (1) (a) - Health, welfare and development of child

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 – First Aid

Regulation 26 – Fire Safety

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 16.

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 provider, staff and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

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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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
 - (b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained present for the duration of the inspection.
- (2) The recruitment records for four staff were reviewed on inspection and met compliance as follows:
- (a) Seven validated written references from a past employer were available.
 - (b) One validated written reference from a reputable source was available.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all four adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda Vetting every three years.

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(d) International Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the State for a period exceeding 6 months.

(4) Documentation was available to show that all adults held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above 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.

Compliance Information

(1)
On the day of inspection there was an adequate number of adults working directly with the children to meet their care needs. There were four adults available to facilitate the care and education of 25 children on the day of inspection.

(3)
The required adult to child ratio was maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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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;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*

Compliance Information

(1)

- (h) The attendance of the preschool children was recorded as they arrived and left the service.
- (i) There was a staff roster in place which reflected the staffing levels on the day of inspection.

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

(1)(a)(b)

Children's learning, development, care and wellbeing was facilitated during the inspection as follows:

The parents and guardians of the children provided all snacks for the children which included a variety of foods including sandwiches, fruit and yoghurts. Water was available for children to access at all times. Staff used lunchtime as an opportunity to promote independence. For example, children were encouraged to retrieve and manage their own lunch boxes with support provided if required. Staff sat with children at lunch time and were observed to actively listen and engage with children's interests promoting positive social interactions.

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Children were observed to use the toilet independently and any child who required assistance with toileting or hand washing was supported when needed. Children were prompted to wash their hands before snack and after using the toilet.

A number of interest areas were available to the children including a tough tray with sea animals and water, a cutting and gluing activity was set up to extend the children's fine motor skills and tabletop activities. Staff facilitated the children's play by asking questions to extend their learning and offering praise. A timer was set to ensure smooth transitions between each activity. The walls of the service had the children's artwork displayed together with a family wall to create a sense of belonging.

The care rooms were spacious and contained varied provisions for play and learning. There were materials and equipment suitable for the age range and number of children attending the service. There were low level shelving units so that the children could easily access the materials and there were sufficient child sized tables and chairs for the number of children attending. The shelving contained activities including a variety of tabletop activities, puzzles, art and construction activities which promoted choice and independence.

An enclosed playground with a variety of play equipment including a sand pit, slide, climbing frame and seesaw was available to the children. On the day of the inspection all children accessed the outdoor area and were dressed appropriately for the weather.

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

Appropriate measures had been taken to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children and staff in attendance as demonstrated below;

General Safety:

Access to the service was secure ensuring no unauthorised access to or from the building. Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of children. Heavy furniture was secured and cables were out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

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Thermostatically controlled warm water was available to the children along with liquid soap and paper towels. Pedal bins were available throughout the service. The service was maintained in a clean condition. Children were observed to wash their hands prior to snack time and after using the toilet.

Fire Safety:

All emergency exits were kept clear of obstruction and regular monthly fire drills took place.

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)
There was evidence to show that one adult held certification in First Aid Responder training, the adult was available for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
(a)(b)
A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored safely in an easily accessible and prominent position in a press in the care room and was available to the children at all times.

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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.

Compliance Information

(1)

(a)

A written record was available detailing fire drills that had taken place in the service. The record showed that the last fire drill took place on 12th May 2026.

(b)

The number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment on the premises was available. The maintenance records confirmed the most recent service was carried out on 29th August 2025. A record was available to show that the smoke alarms had been serviced on the 25th August 2025.