

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

| | | | |
|---|--|----|-------|
| TUSLA Identifier: | TU2015CC206 | | |
| Name of Service: | Knockskeagh Montessori Pre-School | | |
| Address of Service: | Lyre, Clonakilty, Co. Cork | | |
| Eircode: | P85 AV90 | | |
| Name of Registered Provider: | Shirley Finn | | |
| Service type: | Part Time | | |
| Date of Inspection: | 24/04/2024 | | |
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 29 | PM 12 |
| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440 | | |
| Inspection undertaken by: | V. McCarthy | | |
| 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

Knockskeagh Montessori Preschool is a part-time service that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE) at the premises. The service caters for early years children aged between 2 and 6 years and provides one session daily. Opening hours are between 9am and 2pm. It is a privately operated service situated in a rural area. The service operates out of 2 rooms situated in a one storey prefabricated building that is located on the grounds of Knockskeagh National School. There is a designated outdoor play area available to the side of the National School for use by the early years children.

Staffing

The service is carried out by the registered provider and 3 other adults. Each adult works directly with the children, and each has a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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.

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 named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The registered provider who was the person in charge was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 10 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 6 adults attached to the service.
 - (b) There were 2 references and required validations from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file for review in respect of each of the 6 adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every 3 years in respect of each adult.
 - (d) Police vetting was available in respect of 1 adult that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.
- (4)
- A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of each of the 6 adults.

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) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 6 adults working directly with 29 early years children.

(8)(a) There were always at least 2 adults on the premises during the hours of operation. The roster demonstrated that all the adults were on the premises at 9am when the service opened and that there would be 4 adults on the premises at 2pm when the service closed.

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) PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

- The 2 care rooms were positioned in a prefabricated structure located on the school grounds to the rear of the Knockskeagh school building. The care rooms, toilet areas and office space were freshly painted and were all maintained in clean and good condition in readiness for children's use.
- Both the Caterpillar and Butterfly rooms were furnished with child sized tables, chairs, low shelving, low storage containers and an area of soft floor matting and soft seating that were set up attractively and interestingly for the children.
- There was a selection of arts and crafts about spring flowers, rainbows, trees and free art paintings displayed about the walls of the rooms. There was also a selection of posters about families and birthdays in each care room that the children were delighted to refer and point to.
- There was low shelving available in each care room with play materials and items clearly laid out. All play materials such as Montessori materials, the play kitchen, home items, dress up clothes, library books, arts and crafts and toys were all displayed interestingly and were easily visible and accessible to the children.
- There was a designated outdoor play area for the early years children located to the side of the National School building. The area was secured by fencing and gates and was provided with a shock absorbing ground surface. There were different areas of interest available in the outdoor area for use by the children such as low slides, a sand pit and sitting areas.
- There was a developed astroturf area on the school grounds that was surrounded by a high fence and secured gate. The registered provider informed the inspector that recently the childcare service had gained permission from the national school to use this area at a designated time daily for the early years children.
- There were developed rest areas in both care rooms consisting of soft seating, cushioned areas and mats that the children used for quiet time or to participate in relaxed play activities with dolls, books or push toys.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.

Compliance Information

(1)(b)

- The service had 2 sleep mats available on the premises for any child that may require a sleep.
- There was a supply of bed linen available, and the registered provider informed the inspector that the linen was laundered after each use in her home.
- Each care room also had a clearly defined rest area that could be used by the children as they chose.
- The Caterpillar room was provided with a bean bag and a newly purchased soft blue padded corner unit that was decorated with an overhead canopy. The Butterfly room was provided with cushioned seating and soft cubes for children to rest on as they chose.
- The care rooms were each furnished with mats and cushions situated beside the library areas and the children could access them as they chose for reading, play or quiet time.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- All food for the children’s meal and snack break was provided by their respective parents or guardians.
- During the inspection it was noted that the food ate by the children was appetising and healthy.
- A fridge was provided in each care room for the safe storage of the children’s perishable food.
- On the day of inspection, the mid-morning snack consisted of a variety of fruit, yogurts, pasta with pesto and/or sandwiches. The children that remained on the premises after 12.30 had a second food break between 1pm and 1.30pm. At this break, they ate the remainder of the food that was in their lunch boxes which included sliced fruit, crackers, sandwiches, rice cakes and drinks of water.
- Drinking water was always accessible to the children. It was noted that in each care room the children’s individual bottles of water were stored on a low table or shelving and were always easily accessible to the children.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The services’ insurance certificate was available on the premises and demonstrated that the service was adequately insured. The information provided on the insurance certificate included details of the number of children covered which was 44, the start date, which was 28 November 2023, the end date, which was 27 November 2024, the category of service covered which was part time day care and the name and address of the premises. The insurance cover also referred to details regarding, contents, public liability and fire and theft cover.