

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC248		
Name of Service:	Lorraine's Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Cobh (Great Island) Community Centre, Cobh, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	P24 WP82		
Name of Registered Provider:	Lorraine Peterson		
Service type:	Full Day		
Date of Inspection:	24/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM 10
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurranabraher Cork.		
Inspection undertaken by:	D Prendergast		
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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Lorraine's Montessori School first notified in 2011. It is a privately owned childcare service that previously operated as a sessional service. However, following a recent fit for purpose inspection on 7 November 2022, it was approved to offer full day care to children aged two to six years. This includes children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme, which is facilitated from 8.45am to 11.45am, each Monday through to Friday, with the option of an additional half an hour until 12.15pm, also available. Registered daily opening hours are from 7.45am to 3.30pm. However, at present, the service is open from 8.45am to 12.15pm on Tuesdays and Thursdays and from 8.45am to 2.30pm every Monday, Wednesday and Friday. This includes a Toddler group session from 12.30pm to 2.30pm.

The childcare facility is located in the town of Cobh in east Cork and is provided from a recently constructed, single storey premises on the grounds of Cobh (Great Island) Community Centre. There is one large care room, with adjoining child and adult sanitary facilities, a sensory room and a kitchen/office. An enclosed outdoor play space is available at the rear of the building and is directly accessible from the main care room.

Staffing

The early years service employs four adults, all of whom work directly with the children. This includes a relief staff member and one adult employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Support Scheme. The four adults have each attained a relevant qualification 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 inspections 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.

Additional Information

On 25 April 2023, an Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider, in respect of one adult who was noted to be working directly with children, without appropriate Garda vetting. A subsequent response was received from the registered provider on the same date.

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 registered provider was the designated person in charge at the childcare setting. A deputy person in charge had also been identified.
 - (b) Upon the inspector's unannounced arrival, the registered provider was working at the service and facilitated the duration of the inspection. The deputy person in charge was also present.
- (2) The registered provider confirmed that one adult had commenced working at the service since the previous inspection was undertaken on 11 December 2020. Therefore, recruitment records in relation to this adult were reviewed.
- (a) Two written and validated past employer references were on file.
 - (b) None of the written and validated references had been obtained from sources other than previous employers.

(d) Not applicable, as the adult had not lived outside the State for longer than six consecutive months, while over the age of 18 years.

(4) A level 5 award in Early Childhood Care and Education had been attained by the adult and a copy of the corresponding certificate was available.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)

(c) The Garda vetting in respect of one adult had been obtained when the adult previously worked at the service several years earlier. There was no evidence that updated Garda vetting had been sought and obtained, prior to the adult commencing their role as an employee at the service. An Immediate Action Notice was issued to the registered provider on 25 April 2023, in relation to the absence of the Garda vetting and a response from the registered provider was also provided on this date.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has obtained Garda vetting for the staff member.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the updated Garda vetting disclosure.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this regulation has been adequately addressed.

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 an adequate number of adults were responsible for the direct care and education of the children in attendance.

(2) The adult child ratios met the requirements of the regulation as follows:

- During the morning sessional service, 3 adults, which included 1 AIM support staff, were working with 17 children, who were aged 2 ½ to 4 ½ years.
- Five of these children remained for part time care, with two adults available at 12.02pm.
- At 12.44pm, 10 children, aged 2 to 4 ½ years were cared for by 2 adults.

(8)

(a) The service was operated with a minimum of two adults present at all times, as was noted at the time of inspection and through review of written records.

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 total of 30 children were enrolled at the service. A sample of 10 children's registration forms were assessed and found to include the requirements listed from (a) through to (i).

Non-Compliance Information

A registration form was unavailable in respect of 1 of the 30 children enrolled.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A registration form was given to the child's parent, returned and is now on file. Going forward, the registration file will be checked monthly to prevent any paperwork being mislaid.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the child registration form.

Summary Comment

The corrective action implemented by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance identified under regulation 15.

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)

Basic needs:

- Food and snacks were provided at regular intervals; the mid-morning snack was facilitated at 10.15am and at 12.45pm, there was a second meal break for children attending part time care, with the Toddler group children also afforded the opportunity to eat at this time.
- Children's individual needs and preferences regarding eating and drinking were also considered, as was observed during the morning, when one of the children retrieved their lunch box and was accommodated to have a snack before the scheduled meal time.
- The children could freely access the adjoining sanitary facilities as needed and were offered helpful prompts and reminders from the adults in relation to handwashing. Nappy changing for the children who required same was carried out as required.
- A staff member was observed to demonstrate patience and sensitivity when responding to an upset child, who was new to the service, with a focus on providing reassurance and promoting positive behaviour.
- The generously sized care room allowed ample space for the children to interact with their indoor environment. Outdoor play was also accommodated, which allowed the children to participate in more active pursuits.

Physical and material environment:

- Since the Fit for Purpose inspection on 7 November 2022, the entrance to the service had been further developed to include a new sign and several colourful flower boxes, which created a warm and welcoming atmosphere for the children and their parents.
- The range of available materials within the care room helped to build a varied learning environment, which targeted key developmental areas. For example,

- There was a selection of wooden play boards with various latches, locks and bolts, which promoted fine motor skills and cognition.
- Montessori materials and books supported the development of early literacy and numeracy skills.
- Farm sets with artificial grass, barn houses and animal figures encouraged imaginary play, along with a well-equipped shop stall, a play kitchen, dress up clothes and a fully furnished doll's house.
- Building blocks and a designated activity table with plastic bricks, supported construction play.
- Jigsaws, connectable shapes, straws and magnets offered further opportunities to enhance fine motor skills.
- All of the play resources on offer were displayed within reach of the children, which allowed them to independently access their chosen interest items.
- Wall spaces were used to reflect the children who attended and their local community; images of local landmarks and amenities, a display of the children's birthdays and samples of their artwork were all clearly visible.
- A sensory room was also provided, adjoining the main care room. This calm space included a colour changing light, soft floor mats, stability cushions and sensory toys, all of which supported children with sensory processing and self-regulation.
- Additional interest areas had been incorporated into the outdoor environment, which promoted various types of play and exploration;
 - There was a sheltered space with seating for table top activities.
 - A large climbing frame with a slide and a climbing wall supported gross motor development, along with a selection of ride on toys and a basketball hoop.
 - Hand held vehicles, a car garage, a petrol pump and a wooden playhouse encouraged imaginary play.
 - A sand table and a large art easel provided opportunities for sensory and creative play.

Programme of activities:

- The service followed a play-based Montessori curriculum, which was noted to include both adult-directed and child-initiated activities. For example, circle time and storytelling were led by adults, while opportunities for children to engage in free play both indoors and outdoors, were also facilitated.
- Learning themes were explored through a variety of mediums, as was observed when the topic of mountains was introduced to the children; one of the adults used a globe to demonstrate the location of

mount Everest and later reminded the children of an upcoming visit by a parent, who was going to speak to them about mountain climbing.

- Language development was promoted through singing, storytelling and opportunities for children to share their news from the weekend during circle time.

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 children’s need for rest and relaxation was met through the provision of a cosy area within the main care room, which was furnished with a vinyl sofa, cushions and an adjacent bookshelf. Three stackable beds were also maintained in storage for the children’s use as needed.

Non-Compliance Information

There was no linen available for use, should a child require sleep while in attendance at the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

New linen was purchased and is now available, should a child need to sleep.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence and a copy of the order receipt for the bed linen.

Summary Comment

The action taken by the registered provider has addressed the non-compliance found.

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

- A Healthy Eating policy was in place and available for review.
- The children’s meals and snacks were supplied by their parents and guardians.
- On the morning of the inspection, the variety of children’s snacks included sandwiches, rice cakes, yogurts, cheese, lunch meats, pasta and fruit such as berries, oranges and sliced grapes, with water to drink. Similar options were provided for the afternoon snack.
- The inspector was advised that none of the children had allergies or specific dietary requirements.

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:

- Entry to the early years setting was via a key pad operated door, which had a thumb turn lock with a high-level door release button on the interior. These security mechanisms reduced the risk of unauthorised persons accessing the service and also reduced the likelihood of a child exiting, while unsupervised.
- An enclosure of high-level fencing and a secured gate was provided in the outdoor play space, at the rear of the building.
- Staff members ensured that the door to the kitchen was secure when not in use and the key for this door was stored on a high-level hook.
- Cleaning agents were maintained out of the children’s reach.
- Blind cords were securely anchored with suitable tension devices.
- All examined play materials and equipment were safe and in good working order.
- Fire extinguishers were securely wall mounted.
- There were no cables or trailing flexes accessible to children.

Infection Control:

- Wash hand basins were supplied with warm running water and liquid soap. Paper towel dispensers were provided in the children's sanitary areas and an electric hand dryer was available in the staff sanitary facility. Foot pedal operated bins were in place for the hygienic disposal of paper towels.
- The children washed their hands before the mid-morning snack and after outdoor play. Staff members were also noted to remind children to wash their hands after using the toilet facilities.
- The premises was clean and well maintained. Tables were sanitised before and after mealtimes and the floor was swept once the children had finished eating.
- Single use gloves and aprons were readily accessible for use during nappy changing.
- There was individually labelled wall hook storage available for the children's coats.

Administration of Medication:

- No medication was observed to be administered to a child during the inspection period.
- The inspector was informed that none of the children attending the service had been prescribed medication.

Safe Sleep:

- None of the children were observed to sleep at the time of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- No fire safety concerns were noted.

Outings:

- Not applicable, as outings were not conducted as part of the programme of activities.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

The children's perishable snacks were not refrigerated at the service prior to consumption, which did not ensure that such foods were maintained between 0°C and 5°C, as required.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

All perishable snacks are now refrigerated.

Supporting documentation submitted

A photograph of the container that is used to store perishable snacks in the fridge.

Summary Comment

The non-compliance identified under this regulation has been adequately addressed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The available documentation demonstrated that adequate insurance cover was in place, for up to 22 children to attend the service at any one time. The insurance policy was valid until 27 March 2024.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (a) of sound and stable structure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

(a) The premises was a new build, which appeared to be of sound and stable structure.

- (c)
- Adequate lighting was available in the care room, sanitary facilities, sensory room and kitchen. This was ensured through a combination of natural light through windows and LED ceiling lights.
 - Electric heating was provided. The air temperature of the care room was recorded at 21.8°C, which fell within the required range of 18°C to 22°C.
 - Openable windows allowed a supply of natural ventilation to enter the various rooms within the building.

(e) The sanitary facilities adjoining the care room consist of two toilets and two wash hand basins for use by children and a separate toilet and wash hand basin for staff use.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) The wall mounted nappy changing table in the staff sanitary facility was unsuitable to cater for the age range of children attending the service. The written notice attached to the changing table stated *11 kilos/12 months* as the appropriate upper weight and age of children for which it was intended, however, children from the age of 2 years attended the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new changing unit has been ordered and is due for delivery later in the month.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the order confirmation for the changing unit was initially forwarded, followed by photographs to demonstrate its subsequent installation at the service.

Summary Comment

The response from the registered provider was accepted in meeting the requirements of the regulation.