

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CC408		
Name of Service:	The Chalet Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Heather Leah, Lough Villas, The Lough, Cork, Co. Cork		
Eircode:	T12 E061		
Name of Registered Provider:	June Barrett Froggatt		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	18/04/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	9	PM Not assessed
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Administration Building, St Marys Health Campus, Cork, T23X440		
Inspection undertaken by:	C Stokes		
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

The Chalet Montessori School was established in 1991. It is a privately run service situated in a residential area of Cork city and on the same grounds as the registered provider's residence. The service cares for children in the age range 2 years and 6 months to 5 years and offers the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme. The service is currently registered for operating between the hours of 8.30am and 11.30am and between the hours of 12 and 3pm. The service is play based with a blend of Montessori and cares for a maximum of 11 children in both daily sessions.

Staffing

The registered provider is service based. On the day of inspection, the registered provider was assisted by two staff. All staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at a minimum of level 5.

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,*

(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 who was able to deputise as required and both staff members were working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

(1)(b) The person in charge or deputy are present at all times according to the registered provider.

(2) Three staff members were on file as working in the service. The recruitment files of these three staff were reviewed.

(a) When the recruitment files were reviewed two written and appropriately validated references were available from one past employer.

(b) Two written and appropriately validated references were available from five sources other than a past employer.

(c) A garda vetting disclosure was held on file in respect of the 3 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as none of the staff working in the service had lived outside of the state for more than 6 consecutive months as adults.

(4) A certificate of qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education was held on file to confirm that staff had qualifications in childcare at a minimum of Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) level 5.

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) At all times during the period of the inspection the registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children.
- (3) The ratio of adults to children was adequate with the registered provider and two other adults working with 9 children.

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

Basic Needs

- Adults were observed to interact and encourage/assist the children to make the snack time a social occasion, while encouraging independence.
- The children were trained using the toilet and were supported appropriately by the adults to use the toilet.
- There was a cosy corner in the home area to provide for the children's need for relaxation.
- The adults were observed to support the children to interact positively with each other, for example, conversing during snack time.
- Children's need for mobility was facilitated with the use of the outdoor area during the morning session.

SUPPORTING RELATIONSHIPS AROUND CHILDREN:

- The children were supported by individualised care benefiting from 3 adults working with 9 children.
- The registered provider advised the inspector that the service operated in partnership with parents/guardians, with a parental communication online application in use and an open-door approach.
- Parents received emails/texts/ newsletters from the service in addition to the learning stories which are shared on the communication application.
- The setting had many forms of documentation of the children's care and learning for parents. The registered provider described that regular observations on the children were maintained online and that parents receive pictures from the service daily.
- The adults were observed to show positive regard for the children on the day of inspection, with encouragement and praise for specific tasks in a warm and caring manner for example during transition times and tidy up after snack and before outdoor play where nurturing and enthusiastic interactions were observed.
- The setting was integrated into the local community, particularly evident with the community wall which the children had painted.

Physical and Material Environment

- The indoor and outdoor environments were laid out with defined interest areas to facilitate free choice and child led activities.
- The interest areas included arts area practical life, puzzles, tuft trays, cozy area, library, home area with kitchen, construction, and transport area.
- Child sized tables and chairs were available, and children's artwork, family wall and birthday wall were on display at the appropriate height.
- Materials were freely available and readily accessible to facilitate the needs of the children.
- Outdoors the setting was well equipped with sand and water trays, outdoor plastic bricks wall, several tuft trays and chalk play. In addition, there was a lawn area with tunnel and fixed playground style equipment.

Programme of Activity

- The service had a programme of activity in its policy booklet. In addition, the setting had a medium- and long-term curriculum plan and informed by the children's emerging interests, which were facilitated within the daily life of the service.

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:

- External doors and internal doors were secured.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were inaccessible.
- The outdoor area was secured, and no hazards were observed.
- No cables or trailing flexes/leads were observed.

Infection Control:

- A supply of thermostatically controlled hot water was available for hand washing at the sink. Soap, paper towels were in place. A lidded, foot operated pedal bin was available in the toilet.
- Handwashing was observed prior to snack time.
- Tables were cleaned prior to snack.
- A fridge was in place for the storage of lunches and water bottles.

Administration of Medication:

- The registered provider stated that the service only administers emergency medication and that no child currently attending as any requirement for these types of medications.

Safe Sleep:

- Not applicable as the service is a sessional service.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exits were not obstructed.

Outing:

- The service had an outings policy.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was appropriate insurance for a sessional service for 9 children, valid until 27 November 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,*
- (b) safe and secure,*
- (c) kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*
- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Compliance Information

- (a) From visual inspection the premises appeared of sound and stable structure, well-finished and weather tight.
- (b) From visual inspection the premises appeared safe and secure. An appropriate security system with a secured entrance door to manage unauthorised entry and unsupervised exit of children from the service was in place.
- (c) The service was adequately heated, lit, and ventilated. The room was a comfortable temperature, windows were opened for ventilation. The natural lighting could be supplemented with artificial lighting.
- (d) The premises was suitably cleaned and maintained in a good state of repair.
- (e) An adequate ratio of toilets/sinks was in place for children as a 1 to 11 ratio was in place. A separate toilet facility was in place for adults.