

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015CE045

Name of Service: Ennis Montessori School

Address of Service: Cappahard Green, Tulla Road, Ennis, Co. Clare

Eircode: V95 FW13

Name of Registered Provider: Davnet Dwyer

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 08/10/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	62	PM	22

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare.
Inspection undertaken by:	A.McCarthy and E.Saini
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Description of service

Ennis Montessori school was established in 1998, is a privately operated service in Ennis, County Clare. The service provides a programme of care and learning for children on a sessional, part time and full day care basis, Monday to Friday 08:00 to 18:00. A school aged childcare service is also provided.

The service has four preschool rooms, a kitchen area and sanitary accommodation. The outdoor play area is enclosed and divided into designated sections and is located at the back, side and front of the premises. The 4 preschool rooms each have direct access to the outdoor play areas.

Staffing

Seventeen adults are employed by the service. On 08 October 2024 the registered provider, the manager and twelve adults were present.

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 announced and focused on the area of governance, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment (1)(a)(b), (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) and (4).

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels (1) (3)

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

Regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child

Regulation 25 - First aid (1), (2)(a)(b).

Regulation 26 - Fire safety measures (1)(a)(b)(4).

Regulation 28–Insurance

These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report. 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 inspectors wish 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

(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 person in charge and a person was available to deputise in their absence.

(b)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise was available at all times during the inspection.

(2)

Seventeen files were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The findings included the following:

(a)

Eighteen written and validated written references from past employers in respect of adults working in the service were available.

- (b)
Sixteen written and validated references were available in respect adults working in the service from a source other than a past employer.
- (c)
Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the adults working in the service. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d)
International police vetting was available in respect of two adults working in the service who had lived in another state for a period longer than six months.
- (4)
Fourteen adults working directly with the children held Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications at Level 5 and 6 on the National Framework of Qualifications.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4)
An adult working directly with the children did not hold an Early Childhood Care and Education recognised qualification or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

- (4)
Corrective and Preventive Action
The service hired a new staff member with a QQI level 5 in Early Childhood Care and Education. The staff members qualifications and a letter of recognition from DCEDIY were submitted to the Inspectorate. In future the service will be more vigilante about the QQI equivalent qualifications.

Supporting documentation submitted

A copy of the new staff members qualification and a QQI letter of recognition from the DCEDIY.

Summary Comment

Based on the actions taken by the registered provider and supporting evidence provided to the Early Years Inspectorate the area of non-compliance is addressed. The requirement of Regulation9 (4) is met.

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)
An adequate number of adults worked directly with the children in attendance.
- (2)
On the 08 October 2024, the ratio of adults caring for children was maintained in the four care rooms. Eleven adults cared for the sixty-two children attending the service in the morning and three adults cared for twenty-two children in the afternoon.
- (8)(a)
During the inspection more than two adults were available on the premises at all times.

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)

The children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the service through the provision of appropriate activities, interactions, materials, and equipment, having regard age and level of development of the children:

Basic Needs of Children:

The adults treated the children in a kind and caring manner and positive behavioural strategies were used during interactions. The adults conversed with the children in a sensitive and respectful manner, used soft tones of voice, acknowledged the children by their individual names and responded promptly to their cues for assistance. The children were encouraged to be independent in play and learning, whilst caring for their belongings and using the toilet. The adults offered praise and encouragement. The children were respected and supported in their choice of individual and group engagement in activities. The adults worked effectively together to facilitate the programme of care and education in each room and completed the transitions in activities with ease. The children sat together during mealtime and conversed amicably. The parents/guardians provided the children's snacks, and the service provided the lunchtime and afternoon meal. Placemats, crockery and feeding utensils were provided in each room. Mealtime was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion.

Physical and Material Environment:

Four rooms were in operation during the inspection and a communal play and relaxation area was available in the lobby. The children in each room were offered a range of developmentally challenging play and educational activities. The children were observed to be fully engaged as they transitioned from the indoor to the outdoor environment. The care rooms were bright, spacious and well-resourced and were laid out to enable the children to freely move and play. Numerical, alphabetical learning aids and creative work were displayed on the walls in each care room. A variety of opportunities for play and learning activities were available and accessible in the indoor and outdoor environments with defined areas of interest. The care rooms and lobby area included appropriately resourced with nature tables, dress up areas, pretend kitchens, wooden playhouses and an area for the children to

rest and relax. Low level shelving units were accessible to the children with a range of manipulative, imaginative and constructive toys and learning materials for the age and level of development of the children.

The outdoor play area located to the front, side and rear of the service was accessed by the children throughout the inspection. The designated sections contained spacious, all-weather ground surfaces and covered sections for play for year round play opportunities. Planter boxes were provided with plants and flowers. There was a variety of ride on toy vehicles, climbing frames, balance equipment, a large wooden ship, wooden kitchens, slides, pretend playhouses, nature tables, sensory play areas and an art easel with painting materials. All areas were adequately resourced with supporting play materials and equipment.

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:

- A key coded, bell operated system was in place at the entrance to monitor the safe entry and exit of the children to and from the childcare facility.
- The children’s arrival and departure to the service were recorded by the adults in each care room.
- The outdoor play area was secured with a wall and a gate to protect the children within.
- Looped blind cords were secured and inaccessible to the children in each care room.
- Cleaning agents and storage areas were inaccessible to the children.
- Domestic waste was stored in a secured area which was inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

- The childcare facility was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. A completed cleaning schedule was available demonstrating measures taken to maintain the service.
- The sanitary facilities were equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lidded pedal operated bins.
- The children washed their hands at appropriate intervals after play based activities, after using the toilet and before mealtime.
- The children’s perishable food items were stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- An administration of medication policy is available, and the adults demonstrated an awareness of the services administration of medication procedures.
- Documentation is available should medication be required.
- Medication is stored in a secured area out of reach of the children.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point was readily identifiable.
- Fire drills were completed monthly by the service, written records were available detailing completed fire drills.
- Fire evacuation procedures are available at the fire exits in the service.

Outing:

- An outing was not undertaken by the service during the inspection.
- An outings policy was available for staff and parents to inform practice. The staff demonstrated an awareness of the service policy.

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)

An adult working in the service had a record of up to date First Aid Responder (FAR) training.

(2)(a)

Suitably equipped first aid boxes was stored in central locations in the service.

(b)

The first aid boxes were available for use by the adults in the event of an emergency.

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.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Records were available to demonstrate that monthly fire drills were carried out in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 27 September 2024.

(b)

A record of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment was available. The most recent firefighting equipment maintenance service took place on the 23 February 2024.

(4)

Fire action notices demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

An up-to-date record of the number, type and maintenance for the internal, mains operated, smoke alarm system was not available. It is acknowledged the registered provider contacted a fire safety company on the 08 October 2024 and a maintenance service was scheduled for the 11 October 2024.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(b)

Corrective and Preventive Action

A fire safety company inspected all the smoke alarms on 22 October 2024 and were satisfied with their findings. The outcome report was submitted to the Early Years Inspectorate. The smoke alarm system will be checked on a monthly basis by the service and recorded and will be serviced yearly by a Fire Safety company.

Supporting documentation submitted

Smoke alarm maintenance service outcome report

Summary Comment

Based on the actions taken by the registered provider and supporting evidence provided to the Early Years Inspectorate, the area of non-compliance is addressed. The requirement of Regulation 26 (1)(b) is met.

Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Up to date insurance cover was available for seventy-five pre-school children. The policy is valid until the 27 March 2025.