

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CE083		
Name of Service:	Little Harvard's Montessori		
Address of Service:	Seafield, Quilty, Co. Clare		
Eircode:	V95 VK24		
Name of Registered Provider:	Davina Daly		
Service type:	Part Time		
Date of Inspection:	16/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	17	PM 13
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Quality and Regulation Directorate Tusla Child and Family Agency Ennis Primary Care Centre Station Road Ennis County Clare V95TY4E		
Inspection undertaken by:	A. 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

Not applicable

Description of service

Little Harvard's Montessori was established in 2010, in the rural village of Quilty, County Clare. The service is a privately owned, purpose built, dormer style building with an open plan, care room on the ground floor. An outdoor area is located to the rear and side of the service. The programme of care and education is facilitated by staff for children ranging in age from two to six years. The service operates Monday to Friday 09:30 to 13:30 on a part-time basis for 38 weeks of the year.

Staffing

On the 16th of October 2023 the registered provider and a staff member worked directly with the children. The registered provider provides a dual managerial, administrative, and childcare role.

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 and safety. 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, the staff member 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,*
- (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 and a named staff member was available to deputise as required.

(b)

Both the registered provider and the person who is assigned as deputy were available throughout the inspection.

Two files were available and reviewed. The findings included the following:

(2)(a)

Four written references were available from past employers and validated where required.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available and reviewed.

(d)

International police vetting was not required; the adults had not lived in another State for a period longer than six months as an adult.

(4)

The adults employed by the service held a Level 6 Early Childhood Care and Education qualifications 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.

(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)
On the 16th of October 2023 an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children attending the service.

(2)
During the inspection the ratio of adults supervising the children was maintained. Two adults cared for seventeen children in the morning and thirteen children in the afternoon.

(8)(a)
The staff roster demonstrated that more than two adults were available in the service at all times.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1)
Eighteen forms were available for the number of children enrolled in the service. The forms included the particulars outlined from (a) to (i).

(3)
Enrolment records for the children currently in attendance were available for inspection.

(4)
The registered provider ensured that written records were available for all the children currently attending the service. It was confirmed by the registered provider that records are retained for a period of two years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

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 of Children:

The inspector observed the children's learning, development, and well-being to be supported by the members of staff. The staff interacted with the children in a caring, kind and respectful manner. The staff listened to and conversed with the children at their level and responded promptly to their cues to be held and comforted. The children were offered continuous praise and encouragement and the staff used positive behavioural strategies to resolve situations that arose. The children's personal preferences and capabilities were responded to by staff. An informal communication approach was observed during interactions with parents, staff discussed the children's day and observations with the parents during arrival and departure times. Members of An Garda Síochána visited the service during the inspection, played games with the children, explained their role and the children engaged in role play and dress up. The children were observed to enjoy this experience.

The children were encouraged to be independent while caring for their belongings, their play materials and toileting. Areas were provided for the children to rest and relax. The children were encouraged and supported to manage their own personal care appropriate to their age level of development. The children sat together and conversed amicably during mealtimes. Mealtimes were observed to be relaxed and sociable occasions.

The children engaged in extended play in the indoor and outdoor environments. The open plan care room was bright and spacious and was appropriately resourced for the age range and stage of development of the children. The transitions in the changes of activities in each room were facilitated with ease, as staff notified the children in advance of any change in the programme of care and learning. The children played individually and as part of a group and chose their individual activities throughout the session. Staff engaged in open ended discussions and singing exercises, played games with the children and sat with the children as they engaged in constructive, manipulative, sensory and pretend play.

Designated areas of interest with appropriate and accessible supporting materials and equipment for the children. The defined areas included a shop and home corner, sensory area, rest and reading area, low level units with a large quantity of imaginative, constructive and manipulative equipment and toys.

The outdoor area offered a large space for the children to freely move and engage in a range of challenging, diverse, creative and enriching experiences for children. A covered section was provided at the rear of the building and a large space was located at the side of the building. The children played with the pretend kitchen, the sand tables, the slide, the activity station, the basketball nets, the rocking toys, the tricycles and scooters. A slide was located over a tunnel and raised area. A large section provided the children with a gravel pit and a large range of trucks, spades, buckets and a digger for constructive and sensory play. The outdoor area enclosed by concrete walls and gates.

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:

- The entrance to the service was secured appropriately to prevent unauthorised persons from entering or unsupervised children exiting the building. A bell operated system was in place to gain entry to the service.
- The outdoor area was secured with a surrounding fence, wall and gate to protect the children within.
- The children's arrival and departure times were recorded on the services were electronically recorded.
- Cleaning agents were inaccessible to the children and stored in safe locations throughout the service.

Infection Control:

- The service was maintained in a clean condition.
- Running water, liquid soap, hand paper towels and lined, lidded pedal operated bins were available.
- The children washed their hands at regular intervals during the day.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not administered during the inspection. Documentation is available should prescription or non-prescription medication be required.
- Medication was stored in a high, secured cabinet out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- A defined rest area with soft furnishings with an adjacent unit with reading materials was available in the service at all times.

Fire Safety:

- The fire exit routes and passageways were clear from obstruction.
- The fire assembly point was clearly identified with signage.

Outing:

- The registered provider confirmed that outings are undertaken once a year. A service policy was available to inform the staff member's practice.

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)

The registered provider held a record up to date First Aid Responder training.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in the care room in an accessible area.

(b)

A first aid box was 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 16th of October 2023.

(4)

A fire action notice demonstrating the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Up to date records of the number, type and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm system were not available.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(b)

Corrective and Preventive Action

The fire fighting equipment and smoke alarm system have been serviced and certified. A copy of the maintenance certificate for both have been submitted to the inspectorate. Going forward these will be serviced annually in accordance with the maintenance certificate.

Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance service certification.

Summary Comment

Based on the information provided by the registered provider the non-compliance found in Regulation (1)(b) was addressed. The area of non-compliance will be reviewed on next inspection.

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 twenty-two children attending the service. The policy is valid until 27th November 2023.