

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015CW029				
Name of Service:	Millview Montessori School				
Address of Service:	Kilgraney, Kilbride, Co. Carlow				
Eircode:	R93 V5X0				
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Leybourne				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date(s) of Inspection:	01/10/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>30</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	30	PM	N/A
AM	30	PM	N/A		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla Child & Family Agency, Athy Road, Carlow.				
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton				
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).

Description of service

Millview Montessori is a registered sessional Early Childhood Care and Education ((ECCE) service operating from 09:00 to 12:30 hours, Monday to Friday, for 38 weeks of the year. The service is located in the rural area of Kilbride in northwest county Carlow and operates from a purpose-built classroom adjacent to the registered provider's private residence with a second classroom provided in one of the downstairs rooms of the registered provider's residence.

There is a large secured outdoor play area provided for the children onsite.

Staffing

There were five staff members employed in the service including the registered provider, all of whom worked directly with the children and held qualifications in early childhood care and education ranging from Level 6 to Level 8 on the national Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following regulations.

Regulation 15-Record of a Pre-School Child,

Regulation 19-Health, welfare and Development of the Child,

Regulation 23- Safeguarding Health Safety and Welfare of child,
Regulation 25- First Aid,
Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the “Adventurer” Montessori Classroom, The “Explorer” Montessori Classroom and the outdoor play area.

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
- (c) there is a clear management structure in the service that identifies the lines of authority and accountability in the service and the specific roles and responsibilities of each employee and unpaid worker.

(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 designated person in charge on the day of inspection and a named person who was able to deputise as required.

(b) Both the designated person in charge and deputy designated person in charge were onsite during the inspection.

(2) Staff files for the five staff members employed to work directly with the children as part of their role in the service were reviewed by the inspector and the following observations found.

(a)(b) There were two validated references available in each staff member's file from either a past employer or reputable source in the case of a person who had no past employers.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were available on file for each staff member working directly with the children. The registered provider demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had lived outside of the State for a period of six months or longer.

(4) Certificates of accredited qualifications were available in each of the five staff members' files demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 6 to Level 8 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.

(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) The inspector observed that there was always during the session an adequate number of adults working directly with the children in attendance.

(3) In the "Adventurer Room" there were 3 qualified staff members directly supervising and caring for 19 children aged 3 to 5 years.

In the "Explorer Room" there were 2 qualified staff members directly supervising 11 children aged 2 years 8 months to 5 years.

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) to (i) On review of the 12 preschool records available for the 11 children registered to attend the service, the inspector was assured that all particulars (a) to (i) were recorded in detail by the registered provider.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)(b)

On arrival to the service the inspector observed that the five staff members and children from both classes were gathered in the Adventurer classroom enjoying free play and opportunities to choose activities and Montessori tasks, which the staff, on request, supported them in accomplishing, and acknowledged individual children's efforts in completing work.

The inspector observed that children were comfortable and confident in their environment and familiar with the staff present. The children had individually labelled storage drawers for their personal belongings, which they confidently stored away. As each child arrived at the classroom, they took their individual name labels and placed them on the "Who's in School today?" board.

Children were engaged in various activities available in the classroom, including painting Autumn leaves, doing yoga, building blocks, using magnetic connectors to design objects, threading or playing with small world figurines and sensory equipment.

At 09:20 the children each took a chair and formed a circle for large group circle time. The inspector noted that the end of each leg of the child's chair was stuck into a tennis ball. All the chairs in the classroom had four tennis balls attached. The registered provider explained that this greatly reduced the noise of moving chairs in the

classroom, thus creating a quieter and calmer atmosphere for the children, with the grating noise of moving chairs eliminated.

At circle time children carried out their daily calendar changes, discussing the month of October and the arrival of the Autumn Season. Children took it in turns to identify and discuss the day of the week, month, weather and temperature.

Then one child confidently told the rest of the class of their adventures with “Bear”, the service teddy bear, who had stayed with them overnight. The child spoke using a mini microphone explaining how Bear had enjoyed playing with them in their playhouse, on the swings and slide and with the family’s new puppy. The inspector observed that this experience promoted individual children’s confidence, communication skills and expanded conversation and speech development amongst all the children.

After Bear’s adventures were told to everyone, the children then observed a smoothie demonstration, participating by telling the staff what should be added to the smoothie mix, strawberries, mixed berries, orange juice, natural yogurt and honey. After the smoothie was made each child was offered some and where some children enjoyed it greatly, others voiced that perhaps more honey should be added.

At 10:00 hours the children broke into two groups, 19 children remaining in the “Adventurer classroom” while the remaining 11 travelled across the yard with their 2 teachers to the “Explorer classroom”.

Both classrooms had clear identifiable areas of interest which included rest and reading areas, art and craft areas and low-level shelving divided into the various sections of play equipment and tasks for Montessori education. Each Montessori area, mathematical, language, sensorial, cultural and well being were all clearly labelled with photographs. Children knew where exactly to find tasks and where they were stored back, when they were finished with them.

Several children asked if the inspector would like a tour of the classroom, and confidently went from one area to another explaining what they learned in each area and what aspects of Montessori learning that they enjoyed most. The registered provider explained that as children became confident in their school environment and work, they were encouraged to invite their parents for a tour of the classroom, facilitated by the children themselves.

On observation of the children in both classrooms, the inspector experienced staff praising children, reinforcing positive behaviours’ and acknowledging their work. Staff were overheard saying to children “you’re doing a great job, that is the best work, how did you manage to get that to balance all those? Wow well done!”

Similarly, at 10:40 hours when the children had their snack break, children and staff worked together, taking group turns to wash their hands, handing out each child’s personalised placemat and taking turns to fetch their lunch bags.

Children confidently asked staff for help when needed- “can you open it for me please?” or staff offered to help “would anyone like help?” The staff sat with the children having their own break and engaging in conversations with them.

After snack time, children in the “Explorer classroom” discussed emotions and in particular anger, talking about when they felt angry and what made them angry. Then with the staff support they found solutions that would help their feelings, for example spending time in the library and rest area.

After small group time, the classes joined together in the outdoor area, which was a large, grassed area secured with a five-foot wooden fence and green hedging but with views of green rolling hills and the highest peak in Carlow, Mount Leinster.

In the outdoor area children ran to play on equipment of their choice, an activity centre which included swings, climbing stairs, lookout tower and slide. Other areas of interest included an outdoor kitchen, art easel, playhouse, chalk boards, building blocks, ride on toys, wheelbarrows and gardening equipment.

(2) In line with the service’s Management of Behaviour policy, the registered provider ensured that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a preschool child while attending the service.

(3) There were no disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful practices observed in the service. Staff demonstrated that they were well informed in relation to safeguarding the children in their care and managing behaviours positively, in line with the service’s policies and procedures.

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) On review of the staff roster, it was observed, there were two staff present in the service, that had accredited first aid responder (FAR) training. One of the FAR trained staff was rostered to always be on the premises while the children were in attendance. It is acknowledged that the two other staff members employed in the service held basic paediatric first aid training.

(2)(a)(b) A first aid box was available on a high shelf in the “Adventurer” classroom and was always available to the children in attendance.

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) The registered provider demonstrated that a record of any fire drills carried out in the service was maintained.
- (b) Records of the maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms were maintained in the service. The last date of the annual service for the firefighting equipment and for the smoke alarms were recorded as having taken place on the 4 September 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the classroom and in the entrance hall, at the entrance door. A fire assembly point was clearly signed on the fence surrounding the outdoor play area.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

On review of the service's current insurance certificate, displayed on the parents notice board in the entrance hall to the "Adventurer" Classroom, the inspector observed that insurance certificate detailed cover for a sessional Montessori childcare service for 33 children, expiry date 27 November 2024.