

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DR095				
Name of Service:	Dundrum Montessori School				
Address of Service:	Holy Cross National School, Kilmacud Road Upper, Dundrum, Dublin 14, Co. Dublin				
Eircode:	D14 AD66				
Name of Registered Provider:	Sharon Coghlan				
Service type:	Full Day				
Date of Inspection:	21/06/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>37</td> <td>PM</td> <td>18</td> </tr> </table>	AM	37	PM	18
AM	37	PM	18		
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow				
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Fiona Carty				
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
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Description of service

Dundrum Montessori School is a full day care service located in an urban area of Dundrum, South Co. Dublin. Education and care are provided to children aged between two and six years and the service is open from Monday to Friday between 08:30 and 18:00 hours. The service operates from four classrooms located on the first floor within the Holy Cross National School building. An enclosed outdoor play area is available adjacent to the premises for the preschool children with artificial grass surfacing.

Staffing

The service currently employs 13 staff members including a designated person in charge and an adult who performs administrative duties. The registered provider does not work directly in the service day to day. On the day of inspection, 14 adults were present including two students on a work placement programme.

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/ information and records/ 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 regulation 15(1).

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 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

(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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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

(2)
Following a discussion with the person in charge it was confirmed that 6 adults commenced working in the service since regulation 9 was last inspected on the 17th October 2023. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these 6 adults and 2 students who were working in the service as part of a work placement programme as detailed below. The requirements of Regulation 9(2)(c) were assessed for all adults employed to work in the service.

- (a) (b) There were 2 references each available for the 8 adults which had been appropriately verified.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all adults working in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for all adults.
- (d) 7 adults were working in the service who required International Police vetting, the required documentation was available for 6 of the adults.

(4) 5 of the adults held at least a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework. One adult who did not have the required qualification was in possession of a letter of eligibility to practice from the Minister of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. Two of the adults did not require a qualification.

Non-Compliance Information

- (2)
- (a) (b) There was no evidence to show that 1 reference retrieved for a staff member had been appropriately verified by the registered provider.
 - (d) International Police vetting was not available for 1 adult who required it.
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) of regulation 9 were not completed prior to 2 of the staff members commencing work in the service as detailed above.

The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider following the last inspection of the service on the 17th October 2023 did not prevent the re-occurrence of the non-compliances identified under Regulation 9(2)(a)(b)(d) and (3).

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(a)(b) The unverified reference for one employee has been verified by the referee by email.

(d) Application for International Police vetting for one employee has been submitted through the relevant embassy.

(3) An Assistant Manager commenced employment in Dundrum Montessori on the 4th June 2024 to support the Manager with the recruitment process and documentation of new staff to guarantee that all police vetting and references are verified prior to a new employee commencing in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

As international police vetting has yet to be obtained for one adult the requirements of Regulation 9(2)(d) remain outstanding. The regulatory requirement has not been 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.

Compliance Information

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.

- (2) The registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained in the service on the day of inspection. There were 37 children present in the service being supervised by 9 adults during the inspection.

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

A sample of 13 records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspectors to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1) detailed above.

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

Staff reported a healthy eating policy is shared with parents and guardians at the beginning of the school year and that children's snacks are taken in from home daily. A hot meal was provided to the children by the service from an external catering company which was re-constituted on site. Children and staff sat together eating during mealtimes which created a relaxed sociable atmosphere. Drinking water was accessible to the children at all times. Adults were observed using respectful language and gentle tones during interactions with the children, demonstrating warmth and kindness. Staff members were observed to encourage positive behaviours, intervening early during minor disputes and supporting children in finding positive solutions to solve conflicts with peers. Children were encouraged to be independent in their care rooms including tidying up after activities, preparing for meals and caring for their classroom.

The programme of care in place in the service was a blend of a Montessori and play approach. The care rooms were adequately resourced with some play materials and materials pertaining to the Montessori teaching curriculum.

An outdoor play was available adjacent to the service with an artificial grass surfacing. The area was adequately resourced with a variety of play materials and equipment.

Non-Compliance Information

1. Children were observed seated for a prolonged period of time in the Montessori 1 room from 11:30am to 12:29pm in an adult led circle time. During this time children were observed to become disinterested and move around in their chairs standing up and asking to use the bathroom. Staff members were observed repeatedly asking the children to sit down during this time. This may negatively impact on the wellbeing of a child.
2. A designated rest area was not available in the Montessori 4 room on the day of inspection for children to lie down, rest, or take time away from the group if desired. Although materials were available to make a rest area in the Montessori 1 room, these materials were not laid out in a designated rest area and were stored in a basket in the care room.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. On 3/7/2024 the manager conducted a team meeting with M1. The feedback from the Tusla inspection was shared, reflected on and discussed. An article on child led environment was read and discussed as to how this should be implemented in the daily Montessori School routine. The duration of circle time was discussed, and how alternative activities should always be available to children which are age and stage appropriate. The service discussed how this should be implemented. Teachers were reminded to be alert and tuned into the children's level of engagement and interest.

Internal Audits to be carried out on a term basis on class daily routines by the management team to guarantee that routines have a balance between child led and adult led activities, to guarantee that teachers offer the children choices and/or offer alternative activities which are appropriate to the child's age and stage of development at all times.

2. Rest areas will be in place when school recommences in September 2024. New materials have been purchased including rugs, cushions and nap/rest mats and blankets. Designated rest areas will now be permanent areas in each room. The practice of removing them will no longer be acceptable. Rest areas will be permanently laid out in a designated area in each room fully accessible to all children at all times.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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

The inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

The entrance door into service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. The children were supported to wash their hands at regular intervals including after play, after toileting and nappy changing, and before meals. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff were observed to carry out consistent hand washing as appropriate. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. The bins used for disposal of waste in the Montessori 1 room were not pedal operated posing a risk of cross contamination. Staff members and children were observed repeatedly handling the bin lids to dispose of waste.

Administration of Medication:

2. During the inspection, a staff member was observed administering a prescribed medication to a child. There was no second staff member witnessing the medication being administered to ensure the correct dose was given and no documentation completed to record the administration of the medication.

This posed a potential risk of harm to the child should the incorrect dose of been administered, or the child's parents/guardians not being informed and reviewing a record of what the child had been given.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A pedal bin has been purchased and installed in M1. All rooms now have pedal bins. Monthly health and safety audits to be carried out by the management team to ensure all bins are in good working order and pedal operated in every room.

Administration of Medication:

2. On 3/7/2024 the manager conducted a team meeting with M1. The feedback from the Tusla inspection was shared, reflected on and discussed. The School Medicine Policy and Asthma Policy was shared and read through by the manager and staff in attendance. Retraining was given on the medicine policy and accurate and concise completion of the school medicine form by parent and staff. Manager to be kept informed and updated at all times regarding all administration of medication. All staff to be retrained in administration of medication in August 2024.

Supporting documentation submitted

Supporting documentation was submitted and reviewed by the early years inspector.

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

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 trained in First Aid Responder (FAR) training was available to the children on the day of inspection.

(2)

- (a) The first aid box was stored in a conspicuous location within the service.
- (b) A first aid box was available in the service at all times on the day of inspection.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

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

- (c) *kept adequately lit, heated and ventilated*

Compliance Information

- (c) A review of regulation 29(c) was undertaken as part of the inspection to assess the actions submitted by the registered provider to address non-compliance identified during the last inspection of the service. The inspectors observed that the premises were appropriately lit, heated and ventilated on the day of inspection. Mechanisms were in place to ensure the premises could be heated should the temperature of the care rooms drop below the required temperature.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 - Minimum space requirements

(1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.

(2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(2)

A review of regulation 30(1)(2) was undertaken as part of the inspection to assess the actions submitted by the registered provider to address non-compliance identified during the last inspection of the service.

Adequate clear floor space was available in the care rooms during the inspection.