

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS095
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Name of Service:	The Village Montessori
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Address of Service:	Canon Despard Centre, Chapel Hill, Lucan, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	K78 YX96
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rachel Connolly
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Dates of Inspection:	31/03/2025
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No of pre-school children:	AM	55	PM	43
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow.
Inspection undertaken by:	Sarah Quigley & Geraldine Kavanagh
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

The Village Montessori is a privately owned service which was established by the current registered provider in 1999. The service currently provides part-time and sessional care to children aged 2-6 years and also operates an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme. The programme of care is facilitated through a blend of a Montessori and play based curriculum. The Village Montessori is located in an urban area in Lucan, South County Dublin and operates from a purposely adapted premises on the grounds of the Canon Despard Centre. The service is facilitated across three open plan preschool care rooms and has a fully enclosed outdoor play area located to the front of the premises.

Staffing

Nine adults are currently employed to work in the service, including the registered provider. All nine adults were present during the inspection.

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. 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 inspectors wish 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

(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 registered provider, it was confirmed that three adults had commenced working in the service since Regulation 9 was last inspected on the 15th February 2022. Documentation required under regulation 9(2)(3)(4) was reviewed in respect of these three adults as detailed below. The requirement of regulation 9(2)(c) was assessed for all nine adults employed to work in the service.
- (a) (b) There were two references each available for the three adults which had been appropriately verified.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all nine 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) Not applicable, the adults did not require international police vetting.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced that the procedures specified above under 9(2) had been carried out prior to the three adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) The three adults newly employed held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

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 fifty-five children present in the service being supervised by eight adults during the inspection. The person in charge and the area manager provided relief cover to the care rooms when required and were rostered to do so. The operations and training manager provided support to the staff in the care rooms during the inspection but did not form part of the adult to child ratio.

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 sample of twelve records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspector to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that each of the twelve records detailed the required information under Regulation 15(1)(a), (c) to (g), and (i).

Non-Compliance Information

1. One of the records reviewed did not contain details of immunisations received by the child.
2. Seven of the records did not detail the date on which the child first attended the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service got a copy of the child Immunisation record.
2. The record card now has a start date and end date
The service will triple check all registrations at the start of the year for immunisation records. The service have also edited the record cards to have a start and end date.

Supporting documentation submitted

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

Summary Comment

The regulatory requirement has been met.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) Documentation reviewed evidenced that children’s attendance was being accurately recorded in each care room.
 - (i) A staffing roster was available in the service and was reflective of the staff members present throughout the inspection.
 - (j) Staff members stated that medication is not routinely administered to children in the service. The procedures in place should the requirement arise for medication to be administered were detailed to the inspector, and appropriate documentation was available to record this if required. One record available for a child who received regular daily medication in the service was reviewed and met requirements.
 - (k) Records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were available. A sample of the documentation was reviewed and contained the necessary details.

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-

(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.

Compliance Information

The inspector observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

The routine and play experiences in the service were observed to child-led, and children were visibly content and engaged in their play-based and Montessori activities throughout the session. All materials were made accessible to the children at a low level facilitating their choice in play. Staff demonstrated an awareness of the needs of the children during conversations with the inspector.

Kindness and warmth were observed by the inspector during interactions between staff and the children, and adults availed of opportunities to engage in personal one on one conversations with the children throughout the inspection. Comfort was provided promptly to a child if they became upset. Staff remained engaged with the children throughout the inspection, sitting with them and using prompts to extend learning, play, and conversations. Staff encouraged the children to be independent in their environment by allocating tasks including cleaning up following meals and play, and alerted children in advance of transitions.

Drinks were accessible to the children throughout the inspection and rest areas were in place to enable the children to take time out from the group if desired. Children accessed the toilets independently during the inspection. All children were provided with the opportunity for outdoor play and were dressed appropriate to the weather.

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 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 securely out of reach of the children. The entrances into the service were appropriately secured to prevent unauthorised access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.

Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff stated appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy. Pedal operated bins were in place throughout the service for the disposal of waste.

Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required. Individual care plans were in place for children requiring emergency medication and staff detailed the requirements of these plans during discussions with the inspectors.

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

General Safety:

1. Trailing electrical cords from air filtration units were accessible to the children in each care room posing a risk of harm to a child.

Infection Control:

2. A communal towel was observed to be in use in one care room to dry children's hands after handwashing posing a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The cables have been secured.

Infection Control:

2. The towel has been removed. A teacher had gone to get paper towels.

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 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidence that the service was adequately ensured for the number of children enrolled to attend the service and the type of service provided.