

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS160
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Name of Service:	Silveracre Montessori & Afterschool Club
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Address of Service:	43 St Endas Drive, Rathfarnham, Dublin 14.
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Eircode:	D14 PP70
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Name of Registered Provider:	Rita O'Dowd Archbold
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	25/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	50	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K
Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte
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

Silveracre Montessori and Afterschool is a privately owned service in a residential area of South Dublin. The service has been in operation since 1997. The service provides care and education for children aged between 2.5-6 years of age. It operates from Monday to Friday from 7:30am to 6:30pm and offers full-time, part-time and sessional care. The service also participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The premises is a converted two store residential building that caters to a maximum of fifty-five preschool children at any one time. There are two classrooms downstairs and an additional two rooms upstairs that operate as one classroom. There is a large outdoor area divided into two. The premises also includes a kitchen, office and sanitary facilities. The service also offers a registered school aged childcare service.

Staffing

The service currently employs eleven staff including the registered provider who works in the service.

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 and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 11(1), (2) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 16(1)(h)(j)(k) Records in relation to the Preschool Service

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

As a result, the scope of the inspection included pre-Montessori and the Montessori room located upstairs.

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, 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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required. The person in charge was in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider arrived at the service later in the day.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with the person in charge showed that five staff have commenced employment since the last inspection. The files of these staff were reviewed along with Garda vetting declarations for all adults currently working in the service.

- (a) Seven written and verified references were available from past employers.
 - (b) Three written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 11 staff members. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) Police vetting was not required as none of the 5 staff files reviewed demonstrated that the staff members had resided outside of the jurisdiction for 6 months or longer as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that three adults who worked directly with preschool children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) Evidence was not available to show that two adults who worked directly with preschool children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed eligible by the Department of Children and Youth Affairs.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

One adult is no longer working in her position and one adult is no longer working with pre-school children attending the service.

Preventive Action

Ensuring all staff working with pre-school children have the relevant qualification.

Supporting documentation submitted

None.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9 has been addressed. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the service.

(2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

- In the pre-Montessori room twenty children aged between 3-4 years were being cared for by three staff.
- In the downstairs Montessori room eleven children aged between 3-5 years were being cared for by one staff member.
- In the upstairs Montessori room nineteen children were being cared for by two staff.

The person in charge was available in supernumerary capacity to assist as needed.

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;

(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

(h) Daily attendance records for the children were maintained contemporaneously throughout the inspection and were recorded by staff on a software application.

Non-Compliance Information

(j) The form used to record medication administration did not include a section for a second staff signature. This is not in line with service policy that advises staff must have a second person witness the medicine being administered and the second person will countersign the form. One recent medication record was available to review and did not include a second staff signature.

(k) A sample of 15 accident and incident records were reviewed. Seven were not signed by a parent/guardian confirming they were informed of the accident. Records are required to be completed in full.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(j) Software provider contacted to allow second staff signature on application.

(k) All parents have been asked to sign the forms. Forms were resent with a request to sign.

Preventive Action

(j) We now have facility to put two signatures on the application.

(k) A staff member has been assigned to oversee all accident and incidents on a daily basis and to make sure all forms are signed. All staff were also asked to report any incidents to this designated person. Parents were sent a letter explaining how the software application works and emphasised was placed on the importance of signing all incident reports sent to them.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of communication shared with parents.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 16 have been addressed.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- Displays in care rooms promoted a sense of belonging for the children such as their artwork and a community display consisting of a map of houses labelled with the children’s photos and names.
- Furniture and shelving were a suitable size for the children in care rooms and facilitated choice and accessibility to play materials and equipment. Staff were able to adjust the space to meet the needs of the group for example to facilitate space for a yoga activity in the pre-Montessori room.
- The layout within rooms provided space for movement and included a rest space for children if they choose to take a break from activities. A small stair within the Montessori upstairs room led to a small play space the children called “the attic”. It included a child sized sofa and pillows offering a space for rest or imaginative play.
- Children had access to a range of materials suitable to their age and stage of development. For example, in the pre-Montessori room resources included Lego, cars and tracks, a large wooden playhouse and nature table including shells, pinecones, antler and starfish.
- Areas of interest within the care rooms were supported with relevant resources to extend children’s play. The home corner in the upstairs Montessori room included a selection of money made by the children and real items such as baking trays and pots. The home corner within the Pre-montessori room included empty boxes of real household items.
- A secure outdoor area consisted of two adjoining spaces separated by fencing and a gate. Staff advised the areas are accessed by different groups and included equipment to suit the age and developmental stage of the children attending. A range of materials promoted fundamental movement for children including climbing frames, ride on toys, mud kitchen and swings. The area also included covered play spaces offering shelter from inclement 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

General Safety:

- The service entrance was secure when the inspector arrived unannounced preventing unauthorised people gaining access or a child leaving unsupervised.
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.
- The kitchen area was inaccessible to children.
- A handrail was available on the on the small stairs leading to the rest area for children in the upstairs Montessori room.
- Windows were secured with safety latches.

Infection Control:

- Children were supported and encouraged to wash their hands before mealtimes.
- Warm water and dispensed soap were available in the sanitary areas supporting effective hand hygiene practices.
- Staff were observed to clean the tables following mealtimes.
- Childrens lunches containing perishable items were stored in the fridge.
- A copy of cleaning records was completed and available to view on a software application.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed care plan was available for a child who may require emergency medication to be administered.

Fire safety:

- Fire drill procedures were displayed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A trampoline was present in the garden. The inspector was advised by staff it is for use by the preschool children attending the service. The use of trampolines in early years services is prohibited.

Infection Control:

2. The large sandpit in the outdoor area was not fitted with a suitable cover to prevent animals accessing the area. This posed the potential risk of illness from contaminated sand.
3. An area adjoining to the sanitary area in the pre-Montessori room was used to store additional resources. The area was not separated by a door and posed an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. **Corrective action:** The small trampoline has been removed from the garden.
Preventive action: No trampolines will be purchased in the future.

Infection Control:

2. **Corrective action:** We have purchased and set up a covered sand box and placed it in the sand area. This has a lid to prevent animals accessing the sand.
Preventive action: Make sure the sandpit is covered at all times.
3. **Corrective action:** A contractor has been arranged to erect a door in this space.
Preventive action: This will prevent any cross contamination in this area. Works to be completed on August 6th.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- None.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.
- Quotation.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted which have rectified the non-compliances identified on inspection for point 1 and 2, and will rectify the non-compliance for point 3 once work is completed.

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) A review of available documents and conversation with management showed that a staff member trained in First Aid Response (FAR) was rostered to be on the premises and available to the children at all times during the opening hours of the service.

(2)(a)(b) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible for staff if required at any time.