

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DS166
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Name of Service:	Delaford Montessori
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Address of Service:	40 Delaford Drive, Knocklyon, Dublin 16, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D16 E6PQ
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Name of Registered Provider:	Elaine McAllister
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	18/10/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	19	PM	N/A
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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
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Inspection undertaken by:	C. Harte
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

Delaford Montessori was established in 2007. The service is located in a residential area of South Dublin. The service can cater for up to twenty-one children at any one time aged 2-6 years. On the day of the inspection there were nineteen children between the ages of 2.5 - 4 years old. The service offers sessional care including the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Delaford Montessori offers two sessions, 9.00am to 12.30pm and 1.15pm to 4.15pm, Monday to Friday.

The service operates out of two adjoining rooms attached to the house with a separate entrance and a secured grassed outdoor area at the back of the house.

Staffing

There were three adults present on the morning of the inspection including the deputy person in charge. The registered provider arrived in the service at 10.10am and remained throughout 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, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under;

- Regulation 9(1)(a)(b)(c),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25(1),(2)(a)(b) First Aid
- Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b), (4) Fire Safety Measures

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
- (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)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise. The deputy person in charge was present in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in place identifying roles and responsibilities of the staff. This was displayed on the wall by the entrance.

(2) A conversation with the registered provider and a review of paperwork confirmed there are currently six staff members employed in the service. All six files were reviewed.

- (a) Five written and validated references were available from past employers in relation to four staff members.
- (b) Seven written and validated references were available from a source other than a past employer in relation to five staff members.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven 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 six 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 five staff members who worked directly with 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) There was no evidence available to show that one adult who worked directly with 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

We have obtained a letter of Qualification Recognition from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability and Youth. This letter states that the staff member's qualification is sufficient in meeting the minimum qualification requirement for staff working directly with children working in early learning and care services.

Preventive Action

The letter has been added to the staff members file and is displayed in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Document of recognised qualification.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 9(4) has been addressed.

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

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1)(3) On the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children. There were three adults available to 19 children aged between 2.5 - 4 years old when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The registered provider arrived in the service at 10:10am and remained for the duration of the inspection in supernumerary capacity.

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

(1)(b) The following practices were observed to be in place to support the children attending:

- Children were observed to move freely around the care room. When the inspector arrived, the children were working in collaboration with staff to decorate the service for Halloween. After this activity the children were observed to select materials based on personal interest to complete at the tables.
- Staff were responsive to children's needs and helped facilitate children's requests such as colouring by gathering necessary supplies and following up with discussion on children's drawings.
- Staff interacted with children at their level throughout the inspection guided children through conflict resolution encouraging the use of verbal explanation and suggested resolutions.

- Lunchtime was observed to be a social occasion as children sat with their peers and staff and engaged in conversation.
- Children's independence and self-care skills were encouraged for example a child was observed to use child friendly scissors under staff supervision to open a packet in their lunch.
- Through discussion and a review of available paperwork it was explained that staff interact with parents through daily conversation at drop of and collection, a monthly newsletter, text messages and a parent's handbook. The inspector was advised that children settling into the service are invited to visit before they begin with their parents and parents have an additional visit without the children where information on service policies and procedures is shared.
- Children were observed to access the outdoor area on the day of the inspection.

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, staff attend the door to allow access. This prevented unauthorised person gaining access or a child exiting the service unsupervised.
- Equipment and materials in the care rooms were observed to be in good condition and suitable for use.
- Flexes were secured safely.
- Sharp objects such as adult scissors were stored out of reach of children.
- The small steps between the adjoining spaces had a low-level handrail.
- Finger protectors were observed by the main door and sanitary area.

Infection Control:

- Hand towels and soap were hygienically dispensed in the sanitary area.
- Staff disinfected tables following an art activity and before lunchtime.
- Windows were open to allow ventilation.

Fire Safety:

- The emergency exit was free from obstruction.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A bike in the outdoor area had a pedal broken and metal spoke exposed which posed a risk of injury.

Infection Control:

2. On the day of the inspection children's lunches containing perishable food items such as ham, cheese and yogurt were stored in their bags and not refrigerated. Perishable food must be stored in a refrigerator or cool place at temperatures between 0-5°C as there is a risk of contamination. The corrective action taken following the last inspection held in May 2021 was not sustained.
3. Children did not wash their hands after returning from play outdoors. This posed an infection control risk.
4. There was no pedal bin available in the sanitary area. This posed an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. **Corrective action:** Management have disposed of the bike with the broken pedal and replaced it with a new bike.
Preventive action: management will ensure to undertake regular inspections of our outdoor equipment and will repair or remove any broken or faulty items.

Infection Control:

2. **Corrective action:** Management have included a notification in the monthly newsletter to notify all parents that the service has a refrigerator in the service for the storage of any perishable food which may be included in the children's lunch. Management also advised that perishable items of food should be labelled with the child's name on it, which we will store in the refrigerator until lunchtime.
Preventive action: Management will continue to remind parents to label perishable food for storage in the refrigerator if we notice that parents are forgetting to do this.
3. **Corrective action:** The Manager has informed all staff to ensure that children wash their hands after returning indoors after outdoor play.
Preventive action: The Manager will monitor that this practice of children washing their hands after returning indoors from playing outside is being implemented by staff.

4. **Corrective action:** The bin that was in use on the day of inspection has been removed and has been replaced with a new pedal bin.

Preventive action: Management will ensure the pedal bin remains in the sanitary area.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.
- Copy of communication shared with parents.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 has been addressed.

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) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible to staff if required at any time.

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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place for the morning group on 10th October 2024 and the afternoon group on 7th October 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment had been serviced in August 2024 while the smoke alarms had been serviced on 26th August 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were clearly displayed in a prominent position on the care room wall.