

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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|--|---|----|--------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>   | TU2015DY097   |    |        |
| <b>Name of Service:</b>  | It's a Small World Montessori School  |    |        |
| <b>Address of Service:</b>   | 42A Station Road, Raheny, Dublin 5  |    |        |
| <b>Eircode:</b>  | D05 YY48  |    |        |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>  | Karen O'Byrne   |    |        |
| <b>Service type:</b>   | Sessional   |    |        |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>   | 10/09/2024  |    |        |
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b>  | AM  | 31 | PM N/A |
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>  | Early Years Inspectorate,<br>Floor 7 Brunel Building,<br>Heuston South Quarter,<br>St. John's Road West,<br>Kilmainham,<br>Dublin 8 |    |        |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>   | E. Finnegan Hayes & R. Duff   |    |        |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Early Years Inspectors  |    |        |
| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>  |   |    |        |
| 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). |   |    |        |
| <b>Conditions if applicable</b>  | Not applicable.   |    |        |

### Description of service

It's a Small World Montessori School is a privately operated service located in a residential area in North Dublin. The service is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 33 children aged 2-6 years. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and runs morning and afternoon sessions daily; the morning sessions run from 8:45am-11:45am and 9am-12pm and the afternoon sessions run 12:15pm-3:15pm and 12:30pm-3:30pm. The service operates 38 weeks per year in line with the programme rules. The service operates two rooms on the ground floor of an old schoolhouse building namely the big class and the small class. A fully enclosed outdoor area is available onsite to the rear of the service.

### Staffing

The registered provider employs five staff to work directly with the children in the service and also works in the service herself in a supernumerary position providing support to the care rooms. Two adults from a local preschool support service also work in the service to provide support to a number of named children. Five staff were present in the service on the morning of the inspection including the registered provider.

### 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.

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

(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 service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise when required.
  - (b) Discussion with management showed that the designated person in charge or the deputy was rostered to be on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
- (2) A review of the staff sign in sheets and discussion with management showed that there are currently eight adults employed in the service including the registered provider and two adults employed by a local preschool support service. The files of all staff members were reviewed as part of the inspection.
- (a) (b) Sixteen written and verified references were available for 8 adults currently employed in the service.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for eight staff members employed in the service and the student who was present on the day of inspection. The service has also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) Police vetting was available for three staff who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that seven staff members who work directly with the children held 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.

### Non-Compliance Information

(4) Evidence was not available to show that one adult who works directly with the children in the service held 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. It is acknowledged that a qualification was available on file however the inspector could not establish that it was a relevant qualification under the legislation.

### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective and Preventive Action

(4) The staff member applied to the DCEDIY for recognition of her qualification. Approval was received on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2024. Ensure that staff coming to the service as support workers have their qualifications verified by myself as well as by their employers.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Documentation in relation to above has been reviewed.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 9 (4).

## 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) There were 31 preschool children being cared for by four adults on the day of inspection. The registered provider was available in a supernumerary capacity and provided support in rooms as needed.

(3) Ratios were maintained during the inspection. The following was observed:

- In the big room twenty-one children aged 3-4 years were being cared for by two adults.
- In the small room ten children aged 2.5-3 years were being cared for by two adults.

## 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

#### Compliance Information

(1)(a)

#### Basic Needs:

- A calm and welcoming atmosphere was evident on arrival in the service. Staff and children were engaged in a range of activities.
- Staff in the small room provided support and reassurance to children who had recently started in the service and were still settling.
- Children enjoyed freedom of movement throughout the service in the care rooms and outdoor area and were observed to engage in a range of activities without restriction.

#### Physical and Material Environment

- A range of montessori equipment and toys were available in both care rooms. Materials were grouped appropriately in defined areas and accessible to the children on low level shelving supporting choice and decision making.
- Child sized tables and chairs allowed children to engage in tabletop play and mealtimes comfortably.
- Children's photographs were used to create a visual attendance record which was displayed at the children's level and promoted a sense of identity and belonging for the children.
- The outdoor area was well equipped with a range of toys and materials to support a range of play experiences for example, muck and sand provided a sensory messy play experience, playhouses and kitchens which were stocked with a large amount of supporting resources provided opportunities for imaginary and pretend play and climbing bars and slides provided an opportunity for gross motor play.
- A small area to the rear of the garden had a bench and table and provided a slightly secluded area to sit and rest or take a break from activities.

### Supporting relationships:

- Staff were knowledgeable of the individual needs of the children present and implemented strategies to support children as needed throughout the day for example staff in the big room were observed to adequately support a child through a transition ensuring a calm environment and meeting the individual needs of the child.
- Staff used low tones when speaking to the children and interactions between staff and children were observed to be kind, caring and respectful.
- Staff were attentive and responsive to the needs of the children throughout the day and responded in a calm and relaxed manner for example staff in the big room provided adequate support to a child who they have identified as needing support with transitions.
- Staff engaged in the children play and activities which supported and encouraged the children's learning.

### Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

#### Regulation 22 – Food and drink

*A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.*

#### Compliance Information

- The service had a healthy eating policy which is implemented in the service.
- Time is allocated in the daily routine for children to engage in a mealtime experience and lunch is provided by parents.
- Suitable portions of food were observed to be available for all children on the day of inspection and a range of foods were provided including sandwiches, wraps, fruit, and yoghurts.
- Independence was encouraged however staff were on hand to help when required.
- Water was provided by the service for all children.

### 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 secured throughout the day and staff were observed to attend the door to allow visitors access. This prevented unauthorised persons entering the building without the knowledge of staff.
- The door was fitted with a thumb turn lock at adult height and a second door inside the main entrance door which also had a lock at adult height prevented children access the door and leaving the service unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were maintained in good condition free from hazards.
- Flexes and a phone cord were adequately secured out of reach of the children.
- Radiator covers were adequately secured to the wall to prevent injury to the children.

#### Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, dispensed soap and paper handtowels were available to support adequate hand hygiene.
- Handwashing was completed regularly throughout the day after toileting and outdoor play and before mealtimes in line with the service policy.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items such as used tissues.
- Food which was brought from home was refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Windows were open in the care room allowing fresh air to circulate

#### Administration of Medication:

- Healthcare plans were available for a number of children who required emergency medication. Medication which was held onsite was stored appropriately out of reach of the children accessible to staff if needed.

#### Fire Safety:

- Staff were aware of the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency
- Attendance records were completed in a timely manner and clearly reflected the children present in the service on the morning of the inspection. This supports the safe evacuation of the children in the event of a fire emergency.
- Fire exits were clear and unobstructed on the day of inspection.

### Non-Compliance Information

#### General Safety:

1. A number of items which posed a risk to the children were stored in low level presses accessible to the children in the big room including cleaning products and adult scissors. Although a locking mechanism was available on one press this was not used on the day of inspection to prevent access by the children. This posed a potential risk of injury to the children.
2. Four gel air fresheners were accessible to the children on a ledge behind the toilets in the children's sanitary area. This posed a potential risk of injury to the children.

#### Administration of Medication:

3. The service did not ensure clear labelling and disposal of out-of-date medication in line with the service policy for example two items of emergency medication were present in a medication storage box in the service; one of which was labelled for a person who no longer attend the service. A second item was not labelled and the name on the bag in which both were stored did not match the name on the first medication. Both medications were observed to be out of date. Out of date medications should be removed from the service in a timely manner in line with the service policy.

### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

#### Corrective & Preventive Action

#### General Safety:

1. All items have been removed from the low-level presses and put out of reach of the children. Staff have been reminded to always keep the presses locked and a "keep locked" sign has been put on the door.
2. Air fresheners removed from toilets.

#### Administration of Medication:

3. All medications from children who have left the service or medications that are out of date have been removed from First Aid cabinet and brought to pharmacy.

#### Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of above have been reviewed.

### Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

## 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 firefighting 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) The registered provider ensured that the following records were maintained;
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills showed that the last fire drill had taken place on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2024; the service is closed in July and August.
  - (b) A record of servicing and maintenance for the firefighting equipment showed that both the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were serviced during February 2024.
- (4) Notices detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured as a sessional service with capacity for 33 children. The insurance certificate reviewed showed that the insurance is due to expire on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2024.