

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY145
Name of Service:	Na Fianna Montessori
Address of Service:	Glasnevin Tennis Club, Ballymun Road, Dublin 9, Co. Dublin
Eircode:	D09 DR76
Name of Registered Provider:	Barbara Blake, Rita Cassin
Service type:	Sessional
Date of Inspection:	08/11/2023

No of pre-school children:	AM	21
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:	T. Nelson	
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.
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Description of service

Na Fianna Montessori is a sessional service located in Dublin 9 and is registered to provide early childhood care and education to a maximum of 40 children aged 2 to 6 years old Monday to Friday, from 9.00am to 12.00pm. The service operates for 38 weeks of the year. Na Fianna Montessori operates from a large hall in a local tennis club with sanitary facilities available for children and staff. The hall is divided into three care-pods. There is access to an outdoor area to the side of the premises

Staffing

There are three staff employed by the service, including the two registered providers and another staff member. All three staff members were present on the day of 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/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under:

- Regulation 9(1),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child

- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid
- Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 10. This finding is outlined within the relevant regulation within this report.

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 providers, 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) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.
- (b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of the three staff were reviewed and the following checks had been completed:

- (2)
 - (a) Five validated written references were available from recent past employers.
 - (b) Three validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.
 - (c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the four staff members.
 - (d) One adult who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.
- (4) The three staff members 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, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth Affairs.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that there was a written policy or procedure for healthy eating in place. This is one of the specified policies under Schedule 5 of the Regulations.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A healthy eating policy was developed by the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Health Eating Policy.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 10 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

(1) (3) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service to meet their basic care needs. There were three staff available to the 16 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 4 years old.

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

(1)(a)

The learning, development and wellbeing of the children was facilitated through the following examples:

Basic Needs:

- The children's need for the toilet was tended to immediately, and step-ups were provided to allow children to comfortably access the toilets and sinks in the sanitary accommodation. Children were respectfully supervised while using the toilet independently, with the staff member available to provide assistance if required.
- The children had the freedom to move throughout their pod and choose an activity, this promoted independence.
- There was a visual routine displayed and this was reflected in the practice. Routines provide for predictability which can facilitate comfort and positive wellbeing for children.

Supporting relationships:

- There was a key worker system in place where a child is assigned a key person. This can assist in developing a secure relationship and facilitates staff to know a child and their interests.
- Staff interacted with the children in a warm and sensitive manner using low tones and a slow pace. Activities were timed to suit the needs of the children. This can support positive behaviour management.
- Peer relationships were observed to be facilitated. For example, in large group story time the circle was immediately adapted to allow friends to sit beside each other.

Programme of learning activities:

- There was a written plan detailing short and medium-term learning activities for the children. The current theme was the solar system and this was reflected in posters on the walls, products of children's art activities, and the conversation and songs in circle time.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs:

1. There was no area available where a child could take a break from activities and rest. Young children require a comfortable space to remove themselves from activities. This can assist in regulating their emotions when feeling dis-regulated which promotes positive behaviour management. This was identified as a non-compliance on the last inspection and the corrective and preventative measures put in place were not effective to prevent a recurrence.

Physical and Material Environment:

2. The layout of the room was disorganised and lacked planning, this limited children's ability to engage and focus on their play experiences in a meaningful way. Children who are disinterested or who lack positive engagement in tasks can potentially engage in negative behaviours or will have limited learning experiences. For example:
 - There was no direct access to mark-making equipment in one of the pods.
 - Equipment and materials were not consistently grouped in defined or themed interest areas. Props for the kitchen in one of the pods was not stored within sight or easy access of the play kitchen. This reduces a child's interest in meaningful play experiences and limits focused play environments for children.
 - There was not consistent labelling which can provide comfort to children in knowing where things go.
 - Books and equipment were not displayed in a pleasing or organised manner which can limit the possibility for the child to engage with the materials.
 - Jigsaws were stored incomplete, with no visual guide to support children make the jigsaw. This limited the play value of the equipment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. A rest area is available to the children.
2. Labelling is now in place so the children can find things easily, books are displayed with clear labelling, kitchen and food stuff kept together.

Supporting documentation submitted

1. Photographic evidence submitted.
2. Photographic evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 19 have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next 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

The service had taken the following measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children:

General Safety:

- All cleaning agents and sharp equipment were stored out of reach of the children in locked presses or on high shelves.
- A record was maintained of accidents and incidents that occur in the setting.
- Electric cables from the air conditioning unit and speaker were secured.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use paper towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash before mealtime and after using the toilet.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed and documentary evidence showed fire drills were completed monthly. The fire assembly point in the outdoor area was clearly indicated.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The following shelving units were observed to be unstable and posed a risk of injury to the children:
 - The blue and green plastic shelving unit.
 - The wood shelving unit with the metal poles.
 - The cardboard pencil shelving unit.
2. Children were observed to have whole grapes in their lunch boxes. These posed a risk of choking to children.
3. The following was observed in relation to the outdoor play area:
 - The outdoor play area was not observed to be fully enclosed. A member of the public was observed in the outdoor play area on the morning of the inspection. Children could potentially exit the premises unsupervised, or an unauthorised person could gain access. It is acknowledged that the children were not in the outdoor play area at this time.
 - There was no written risk assessment available on the day of the inspection highlighting the risks or hazards associated with the outdoor area, and any measures put in place to minimise these risks.

These were identified as non-compliances on the last inspection and the preventative measures put in place were not effective to prevent a recurrence.

Infection Control:

The following increased the potential risk of infection:

4. There was a build-up of dust and debris in the corners and in behind shelving units. This could potentially cause infection should children access this.
5. Children's lunches were not stored refrigerated. These were observed to contain perishable items such as yogurts and meats. This was identified as non-compliance on the last inspection and the preventative measures put in place were not effective to prevent a recurrence.

Fire Safety:

6. The details of the attendance of children was not accurately recorded in the attendance book. The inspector observed only 16 children recorded when there were 21 children present. Contemporaneous accurate attendance logs must be maintained to support the safe evacuation of children in an emergency. This was identified as non-compliance on the last inspection and the preventative measures put in place were not effective to prevent a recurrence.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The shelving was removed.
2. A message was given to parents to cut grapes in half if given in lunches.
3. The service will not have outdoor play on Wednesday when members of the public attend for a weekly club meeting. A risk assessment was development.

Infection Control:

4. Deep clean was carried out immediately, and a cleaning roaster put in place.
5. All lunches refrigerated.

Fire Safety:

6. One attendance book for all three pods in the service is now used to accurately record attendance.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. No evidence submitted.
2. No evidence submitted.
3. Risk Assessment submitted.

Infection Control:

4. No evidence submitted.
5. Photographic evidence submitted.

Fire Safety:

6. No evidence submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliances found under Regulation 23 have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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) The service provided evidence that a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school. There were two staff trained at this level.

(2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

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 of fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on the 16 October 2023.
- (b) An up-to-date maintenance record was available for the Fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises. The fire extinguishers were serviced in January 2023 and the smoke alarms were maintained on the 9 August 2023.

Non-Compliance Information

- (4) There was no notice displayed in the room of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire. This can impede the safe evacuation of the premises in the case of a fire.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Plans of the fire exits have been placed at all exits routes

Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 26 has been addressed.