

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY259			
Name of Service:	Parklands Nursery & Montessori School			
Address of Service:	14/15 Herbert Place, Dublin 2, Co. Dublin			
Eircode:	D02 TN29			
Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Maguire			
Service type:	Full Day			
Date(s) of Inspection:	16/11/2023			
No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	28
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F			
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin			
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

Parklands Nursery & Montessori School is located in Dublin City centre and operates from a converted Georgian building. A service is offered to children aged 0 to 6 years old on a full-time basis from 8am to 6pm daily. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. There are five care rooms which include a baby room which is partitioned into two sections, one toddler room, one Montessori room and two additional care rooms which are used to provide extra learning and play opportunities for the children. On the day of the inspection children from the toddler and Montessori room were observed to rotate through the different care rooms in a safe and structured manner. There is access to two separate outdoor areas at the front of the property and one outdoor area at the rear of the property.

Staffing

A total of twelve staff are employed in the service including the registered provider who provides support to the service when required and one staff member who is employed in an ancillary role as the cleaner. On the day of inspection there was a dedicated person in charge, a deputy person in charge and eight staff working directly with the children when the inspector arrived in the morning. The registered provider arrived shortly after and remained for the duration of the inspection. The registered provider and ten of the staff who work directly with children have obtained a childcare qualification recognised on the National Qualifications Framework.

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/premises and facilities. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The initial inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations:

Regulation 9 (1)(a), (b), (c) (2)(a), (b), (c), (d), (3) and (4) Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 (1), (2) and (8)(a) Staffing Levels

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25 First Aid

Regulation 26 Fire Safety

Regulation 28 Insurance

However, on inspection an additional non-compliance was identified under Regulation 27 Supervision. The findings are outlined within the relevant regulation within this report. A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 19 and Regulation 23. The scope of the inspection included the baby room.

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, deputy 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.*

(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

- (1)(a)(b) The service had a named person in charge and designated person to deputise in their absence if required. A review of the roster demonstrated that a person in charge or a deputy is on the premises during the opening hours of the service.
- (c) A clear management structure was in place in the service and staff and management were aware of their role and responsibilities.
- (2) A total of twelve staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection this included ten staff working directly with the children, the registered provider and one staff member who works in an ancillary role as a cleaner.
- (a) Twenty-one validated written references were available from 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 twelve staff members.
- (d) International Police Vetting was available for twelve staff members who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult.
- (3) On review of the twelve staff members files it was noted that Garda Vetting Disclosures were received prior to eight of the twelve staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that the registered provider and the ten 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

- (3) On review of the twelve files, documentation showed that the procedures specified in paragraph (2)(c) Garda Vetting was not carried out prior to four staff members being appointed, assigned, or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service. It is acknowledged that the four staff members were not included in the child/adult ratio during this time and were on the premises to access training.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that going forward, all new staff members who are available to start work immediately, will start their induction training from home while the service is waiting for their Garda Vetting to come through. The registered provider has stated that this means that new staff members will not have access to the premises and children while the service is waiting for their Garda Vetting. The completion of their training will be done only on the premises once the service has received their Garda vetting.

Summary Comment

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

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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times,

Compliance Information

(1) There was an adequate number of adults working directly with children at all times. The registered provider was available in a supportive role on the day of the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of staff members caring for children was maintained on the day of inspection. The following ratios were observed:

Montessori 1 Room - There was one staff member caring for five children aged 3-4 years during the morning at 9.50am. There was one staff member caring for five children aged 3-4 years during the afternoon at 3.19pm.

The Baby Room- There were two staff members caring for six children aged 4 months-15 months during the morning at 9.52am. There were two staff members caring for six children aged 4 months-15 months during the afternoon at 3.20pm.

The Top Room- There was one staff member caring for four children aged 3-5 years during the afternoon at 3.22pm.

The Toddler Room- There was three staff members caring for eleven children aged 16 months-3 years during the morning. There were two staff members caring for six children aged 16 months-3 years during the afternoon at 3.25pm.

The Montessori 2 Room- There were one staff member caring for seven children aged 3-5 years during the morning at 10.02am and one staff member caring for seven children in the afternoon at 3.35pm.

(8)(a) Two staff members were present at all times in the service as evidenced from examination of the staff roster and staff reported hours of attendance.

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)

Basic Needs:

- The service promoted healthy eating. On the day of the inspection children were observed to eat crackers and cheese for their morning snack and chicken, leek and potato bake for dinner time. All meals are freshly prepared daily on site. Staff reported the weekly food menu is shared with parents/guardians and alternative meal options are available for children. For example, one child in the baby room was in the process of weaning. This child was offered an alternative dish of mashed sweet potatoes croquettes and broccoli. This meal plan was devised in collaboration with the parents/guardians of the child.
- Children's drinks were available within their reach throughout the day and children were encouraged to take plenty of drinks.
- Bibs were used for the younger children during meals to help maintain their personal appearance.
- Staff were responsive to the cues of the children, for example when a baby was crying at dinner time the staff member immediately sang a song and helped calm the baby before offering another spoonful of dinner.
- Nappy changing was done routinely three times a day and as needed to ensure the child's comfort.
- There was a 'Day in the Baby Room' displayed on the wall which included pictures of each baby/child partaking in activities in the room. Additionally, each child had their own place mat with their picture on it. This builds a sense of identity and belonging for children in the service.

- Children from all care rooms were observed to access the different outdoor areas on more than one occasion during the day. This supports their social, cognitive, and gross and fine motor development.

Supporting Relationships:

- Children were encouraged and praised at mealtimes. Staff were observed to sit with the children and support was offered where needed. For example, in the baby room the staff were observed to sit beside the children and encourage them to feed independently by showing them how to use their spoon. This promotes children's social and emotional wellbeing and independence skills.
- Language used by staff was observed to be kind, considerate and supportive. For example, in the Baby room during nappy changing procedures children were observed to be spoken to in a reassuring and friendly manner throughout the nappy changing procedure. Additionally, at sleep time staff sat between cots and spoke to children in a kind and reassuring manner. For example, the inspector observed the staff member telling a child that it was okay to go asleep that she would be remaining in the room.

Equipment and Materials:

- There were appropriate chairs for feeding in the care rooms to facilitate the children to eat comfortably and independently. In addition, the baby room provided two types of spoons for eating one with a long handle and one with a short handle. Staff discussed how children are given the option to use either during mealtimes. This promotes independence and self-care skills.
- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. Equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity. For example, in the baby room there was adequate space for the babies and toddlers to explore their environment. Materials and equipment included a sensory wall, an art area, lots of building blocks, connecting equipment, push along toys, a rocking reindeer and cause and effect toys, for example, musical battery-operated toys. Cause and effect toys help promote joint attention, play skills and exploration.
- There were cosy areas observed in each care room for the children to relax in as required. In the baby room there were two adult armchairs to support the comforting of children, and these were observed in use during the inspection. In addition, there was a cozy corner with books and a mirror with a pull up bar for the babies to use.

- There was evidence that equipment and materials were provided based on children’s individual needs and emergent interests. In the Montessori 1 room, staff showed the early years inspector dolls with crutches, a cast, and a wheelchair. Staff discussed how one child had been curious about what people do if they do not have use of their legs and cannot walk. Following this conversation staff had sourced this equipment. Staff discussed how the equipment has supported conversations around diversity and inclusion within the service and at home.
- The outdoor areas were observed to be well-maintained with adequate equipment for play. For example, the garden at the back of the service had balls, scooters, garden stools, a table, and a playhouse for the children to play in. In the front outdoor area, which is used mainly for the baby room staff were observed bringing out toys which were developmentally appropriate for children attending the baby room.

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 entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play areas were secure with surrounding walls and securely gated reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor areas from indoors were observed to be supervised.
- Toys and equipment used by the children were observed to be well maintained and in a good state of repair.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach of children.

Infection Control:

- The children were facilitated to wash their hands before eating, after using the toilet, and after nappy changing.
- The premises was observed to be in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Individual bed linen was used for the sleeping children.
- Soothers were stored safely, and staff in the baby room were knowledgeable on how to wash and sterilise soothers between use.

Administration of Medication:

- Clearly written individual medical care plans were available to enable staff to identify and accurately administer medication and treatment when required. From discussion staff were familiar with individual care plans in place for children.

Safe Sleep:

- Children under the age of two years old were provided with a cot for sleep.
- Heavy clothing was removed before sleep time.
- Cellular blankets were used.
- Lighting was subdued in the sleep rooms and soft music was played.
- An ambient temperature of 16-20°C was maintained in the cot room for children under 1 year old.
- Whilst children slept, 10 minutes checks were carried out and recorded by a staff member who stayed in the room for duration of sleep time. The records taken noted the children's position, breathing and colour.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

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

(2)(a)(b) The first aid boxes within the service were suitably equipped, stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and were available to the children at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) On review of the staff files it was observed that there was no staff member with First Aid Responder (FAR) training available to the children. It is acknowledged that seven staff members employed in the service are trained in paediatric first aid and two staff members are due to complete First Aid Responder (FAR) training in December 2023. However, on the day of the inspection there was no person with FAR training available to meet the regulatory requirements.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

The registered provider has stated that two staff members are booked in for the First Aid Responder (FAR) course (1 staff member in January and 1 staff member in February). The Registered provider has stated that once the FAR training is complete, the service will email the inspectorate to say is complete and awaiting certification. In the CAPA response the registered provider has stated that in the future the service will mark in their calendar at least 3 months before staff members FAR is expired. This will allow the service enough time to book the FAR refresher course and ensure this situation does not reoccur.

Supporting documentation submitted

Email verification of First Aid Responder (FAR) course booked for two staff members.

Summary Comment

The corrective action taken by the registered provider will address the non-compliance identified at inspection. Regulatory compliance remains outstanding until the FAR course is completed and certification obtained.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 15 November 2023.
- (b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in July 2023. Smoke alarms were serviced on 16 October 2023.
- (2)(c) Records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were provided.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were displayed in prominent positions at the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Non-Compliance Information

The registered provider did not ensure that preschool children attending the service were supervised at all times. This was evidenced by the following:

- At 10.42am one staff member working in the baby room was observed by the early years inspector to take a child into the nappy changing area to change the child's nappy. During this time a second staff

member was positioned in the partitioned area to the back of the room caring for two children. This meant that during this time there were three children in another section of the room that were not within her line of vision. Young children need to be visible at all times to ensure they are kept safe.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Immediately after the inspection management had a meeting with the baby room staff members and discussed the seriousness of the situation that happened earlier that day. Management reminded all staff members of how important it is for the health and safety of the children that they must be visible at all times. Management reminded each care room that they could contact management or the float person, whenever they need cover or support for example nappy changing and covering of staff breaks.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Written verification from the registered provider that this meeting had taken place immediately due to the seriousness of the situation.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has addressed the non-compliance under Regulation 27.

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 adequately insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for the number of children the service can accommodate at one time and an expiry date 27 March 2024.