

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY265
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Name of Service:	Rathgar Montessori Kindergarten
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Address of Service:	37 Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin 6.
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Eircode:	D06 CF25
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Name of Registered Provider:	Michelle Steen
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	22/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM	22
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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:	Ciara 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

Rathgar Montessori Kindergarten is located in an urban area close to Rathgar village. The service operates from the ground and lower ground floor of a house in a residential area. The service provides care and education to children aged 2-6 years and is registered to be open from Monday to Friday between the hours of 8am and 5:30pm. There are four childcare rooms - Montessori One, Montessori Two on the ground floor level and Montessori Three and Montessori Four on the lower floor rooms. An enclosed outdoor play area is situated at the rear of the building.

On the day of the inspection the Montessori One room was not in operation but used later in the afternoon as a sleep space.

Staffing

On the day of the inspection there were five adults providing care to the children including the deputy person in charge. The registered provider arrived at the service at 10:18am and stayed for the remainder 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 and 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),(2) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i) Record of a Pre-school Child
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid

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, 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.

(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 persons to deputise as required. The deputy person in charge was in the service when the inspectors arrived and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection. A review of the roster showed that a designated person in charge is rostered to be on the premises at all times.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and staff were aware of their role and responsibilities.

(2) A review of paperwork and conversation with management showed that three staff who work directly with early years children have commenced employment since the last inspection. The files of these staff were reviewed in full along with Garda vetting declarations for all staff currently employed in the service.

- (a) Four written and verified references were available from past employers.
- (b) Two written and verified references were available from a source other than a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for nine adults whose files were reviewed. 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 available in relation to three staff members who had lived outside of Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that three staff members who worked 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.

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 there was an adequate number of adults available to the children at all times during the day. There were five staff working directly with 21 children on the morning of the inspection. The registered provider was also available to provide support as needed.

(2) Ratios were maintained in the care rooms throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

- In Montessori 2 room two adults were caring for 5 children aged 2 years 3 months - 2 years 6 months.
- In Montessori 3 room two adults were caring for 8 children aged between 2 years 8 months- 4 years.
- In Montessori 4 room 1 adult was caring for 8 children aged between 3-5 years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a pre-school service in a drop-in centre or a temporary pre-school service shall ensure that a record in writing is kept in respect of each pre-school child attending the service containing the following particulars:

- (a) the name and date of birth of the child;*
- (b) the date on which the child first attended the service;*
- (c) the date on which the child ceased to attend the service;*
- (d) the name and address of a parent or guardian of the child and a telephone number where that parent or guardian or a relative or friend of the child can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service;*
- (e) authorisation for the collection of the child;*
- (f) details of any illness, disability, allergy or special need of the child, together with all the information relevant to the provision of special care or attention;*
- (g) the name and telephone number of the child’s registered medical practitioner;*
- (h) record of immunisations, if any, received by the child;*
- (i) written parental consent for appropriate medical treatment of the child in the event of an emergency.*

Compliance Information

- (1) A sample of ten record forms of children who currently attend the service were reviewed. These records contained all the information required under (a) to (i) above.

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:

- The staff interacted with the children in a respectful and caring manner. Staff were observed to engage the children at their level and used soft tones during conversation. Staff offered clear guidance for children during activities and transitions.
- Children were regularly reminded by staff to use the toilet. Staff supervised the sanitary area and gave assistance to the children if needed. Staff advised of their practice to work in partnership with the parents to support children with toilet training.
- Mealtimes were calm and social experiences for the children with opportunity to share stories with their peers and staff who joined them at the table. The children's morning snack was supplied from home while their main meal and afternoon snack was supplied by the service. Staff advised how a colour coded system was in place for children with any dietary requirements to help ensure the children received the correct meal.
- A drink station was observed in both Montessori rooms 3 and 4 encouraging children to drink regularly throughout the day.
- Engagement with families and parents was facilitated by noticeboards on display sharing helpful information and through daily conversation during drop off and collection time.
- The experiences and activities provided to the children in the rooms were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children present. Children had choice in their own activities, and planned activities facilitated individual, paired and group activities.
- All children were observed to access the outdoor play 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 securely locked on arrival to the service with an intercom system in place. Staff were observed to attend the door to allow access to visitors.
- Cleaning products were observed stored out of reach of children.
- Window blinds were secure.
- Cables and flexes were out of reach of children.
- Radiators were positioned high and out of reach of children.
- Finger protectors were observed on doors leading to the garden area.
- A handrail at the children's level was available on the staircase.

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged and supported to wash their hands following toileting and before mealtimes.
- Warm water and dispensed soap was available in the sanitary areas supporting good hand hygiene.
- Children had individual bed linen stored in labelled boxes.
- Children's lunches from home which included perishable items were stored in a refrigerator.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed care plan was available for a child with emergency medication.
- Medications were stored out of reach of the children and clearly labelled with the owner's name.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff were observed to physically check sleeping children and records of these checks were adequately maintained.

Fire Safety:

- Staff were aware of the procedure for evacuation in a fire emergency and evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The interlocking rubber tile flooring in the garden was separated creating gaps which posed a trip hazard for children.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective action: A contractor has relayed the interlocking flooring in the garden.

Preventive action: A contractor replaced the expansion/contraction joints for the rubber locking and explained this would stop it from over expanding/contracting which led to the larger gaps as seen on inspection.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance 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) Suitably equipped first aid boxes were stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible if required at any time.