

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY265

Name of Service: Rathgar Montessori Kindergarten

Address of Service: 37 Kenilworth Square, Rathgar, Dublin 6

Eircode: D06 CF25

Name of Registered Provider: Michelle Steen

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 13/08/2025

No of pre-school children:	AM	25	PM	24
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:
 Early Years Inspectorate
 2nd Floor, Unit 4/5
 The Nexus Building
 Blanchardstown Corporate Park
 Ballycoolin
 Dublin 15 | D15 CF9K

Inspection undertaken by: L Jameson

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 is registered to provide full day care to a maximum of forty children, aged 2-6 years, Monday to Friday between the hours of 8:00am and 5:30pm. There are four childcare rooms namely Montessori One and Montessori Two, which are located on the ground floor, and Montessori Three and Montessori Four, which are located on the lower ground floor. An enclosed outdoor play area is situated at the rear of the building.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service providing support in the care rooms as required. The registered provider employs seven adults to work directly with the children, including the deputy person in charge and six early years practitioners. On the day of inspection, the registered provider, the deputy person in charge and six early years practitioners were present when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service. The registered provider was working in a supernumerary capacity and was available to support the inspection throughout the day.

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 and premises and facilities. 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 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.

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as needed.
- (b) The person in charge and deputy person in charge were rostered to be present at all times during the period when the pre-school service is being carried on and when the inspector arrived unannounced in the service.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.

(2) The full staff files of three adults who had been employed since the last inspection, dated 22 August 2024, was reviewed along with the Garda vetting disclosures of two adults working in the service which had expired since the last inspection. A review of records maintained by Tusla demonstrated that Garda vetting disclosures were dated within three years for all other existing staff.

- (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 were available for the five adults employed in the service. 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 for two adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that the two adults 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(3) Evidence was not available to demonstrate that the procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out in relation to two of the three adults before employment commenced. The following was observed:

- Documentary evidence confirmed that reference validation checks had been obtained after commencement dates for two adults.
- A Garda vetting declaration for one adult who had access to the children had not been considered prior to the commencement of their employment.

Full checks must be completed for staff members prior to them commencing employment in the service in order to establish that they are appropriate to have access to children.

(4) Documentation was not available to demonstrate 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. It is acknowledged that documentation was available, however, it could not be established that this was an approved qualification.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (3) Management will ensure that all relevant checks are carried out prior to a new staff member commencing in the service.
- (4) Management are now aware of the process to follow in relation to qualification recognition for staff members who are in continued college education. Management will ensure that qualification recognition, if required, is sought prior to commencement in the service. The staff member in question has now finished employment in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (3) No evidence submitted. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.
- (4) Documentation in relation to the above has been reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there was an adequate number of adults working with the children throughout the inspection. In the morning, there were seven adults caring for twenty-five children and seven adults caring for twenty-four children in the afternoon.
- In addition, the registered provider was available to provide support in the care rooms where required.
- (2) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. Staff members were aware of the required ratios for the age range of children in the rooms.

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 on the day of inspection which supported the health, welfare and development of the children attending:
- Staff members were observed to interact warmly and kindly, using gentle and reassuring tones of voice, to support the children. Staff members joined the children in play and offered support and guidance during the day.
 - Staff members were attentive to children's individual needs, for example, one child was settling into the service on the day of the inspection. Staff members discussed the settling in period with the inspector, demonstrating their familiarity with the process and ability to assist and support the children during the transition from home to service.

- Positive behaviour management strategies were observed on the day of inspection. Staff members were observed to respond calmly and promptly while supporting children to resolve minor disagreements and conflict.
- Mealtimes were observed to be a sociable and pleasant event, with staff members engaging in meaningful conversations with the children.
- During sleep time, the lights were dimmed, blinds were closed and soft music played in the background, creating a relaxing environment for sleeping children.
- Staff members were observed to tend to children’s individual personal needs promptly, offering discreet supervision for toileting and assisting with hand washing and blowing noses.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that an adequate supply of suitable materials and equipment were available to the children in the service. The following was observed;

- Low level tables and chairs were available for use by the children which allowed them to engage in tabletop activities and meals comfortably.
- The care rooms were designed to support the age and developmental stages of the children attending the service, equipment and materials were stored at a low level to encourage the children’s independence and decision-making skills.
- Cosy areas were available in the care rooms to provide children with a comfortable place to rest or engage in quiet activities.
- Materials including jigsaws and puzzles, books, cars, animals, sensory activities and kitchens with supporting props were available to the children, facilitating a range of play and learning experiences and promoting imaginative play. An array of Montessori materials were also available for use by the children.
- The outdoor play area was split into two sections, allowing children of different ages to play safely. The outdoor play area was equipped with a selection of toys, including playhouses and kitchens with supporting props, ride on toys and scooters, balls, dolls and buggies and see-saws, providing opportunities for a variety of play experiences including gross motor and imaginative play. On the day of inspection,

large umbrellas, which were safely secured, were in use to provide shade while the children played outdoors.

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 service was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises. A buzzer system was in place which was managed and monitored by staff members.
- Cleaning products were stored safely out of the reach of children.
- Flexes and cords were secured safely out of reach of the children.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to the children on the day of the inspection.
- Child-level handrails were available for use on the staircases, which were well lit and maintained.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary areas were equipped with warm water, liquid soap and hand paper towels. Staff members were observed to support children with handwashing at regular intervals throughout the day, before eating and after activities and toileting.
- The service was clean and well maintained, evidence by up-to-date cleaning records.
- Pedal bins were available in the care room and sanitary area to ensure the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The windows were observed to be open to allow for circulation of fresh air in the care rooms and to reduce malodour in sanitary areas.
- Stackable beds were observed to be in good condition and positioned 50cm apart.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti febrile and emergency medication was observed to be in date, stored in the correct packaging and out of the children's reach. No children were observed having medication administered on the day of inspection.
- A detailed care plan was available for a child who may require emergency medication to be administered.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff members were observed to physically check and record the colour, breathing and position of sleeping children every 10 minutes.
- Heavy items of clothing were removed before sleep.
- Appropriate bed linen was in use for sleeping children.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed on the day of the inspection.

Non-Compliance Information

Safe Sleep:

1. An ambient temperature of 18-22°C was not maintained in a room where children over the age of one year were sleeping, which posed a potential risk to children's safety. The following was observed:
 - The temperature in a care room where children over one year were sleeping was measured at 24.5°C.

It is acknowledged that measures were taken by the staff member in the care room to reduce the temperature when brought to their attention by the inspector.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Safe Sleep:

1. Management held a staff meeting to discuss temperatures in the care rooms and how to ensure the care rooms remain within the recommended temperatures throughout the day. Management and staff members will ensure that windows are opened early in the morning on particularly warm days to help reduce the temperature in the care rooms.

Supporting documentation submitted

Safe Sleep:

No evidence submitted. This will be reviewed on the next inspection.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions taken by the registered provider are sufficient to address 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.
- (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) A record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. The records indicated that fire drills were carried out monthly. The last recorded fire drill took place on 6 August 2025.
 - (b) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate a maintenance check was carried out on the firefighting equipment in November 2024 and the smoke alarms on 25 January 2025.
- (2)
- (c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All fire records requested by the inspector were available for review.
- (4) The evacuation procedure was conspicuously displayed on the premises which contained details in relation to the procedure to be conducted in the event of a fire or emergency in 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 that the service was adequately insured to reflect the type of care provided. The insurance certificate had an expiry date of 27 March 2026.