

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015DY361
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Name of Service:	Strand Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Merrion Hall, Strand Road, Sandymount, Dublin 4, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Nichola Doyle
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	15/03/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	25
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	The Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	J. O'Byrne R. Brien
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

This full day care, part time and sessional service is located in an urban setting. The service is registered to provide care to children aged between 2 and 6 years of age. The service's registered opening hours are Monday to Friday between 8.15am and 6pm. They currently run a full day care service from 8.30am to 6pm with a part time service operating from 8.30am-1pm and a sessional service operating from 9am to 12.30pm. A school age service is also provided. The premises operates in part of a modern office block with its own entrance and has two pre-school rooms. There is an enclosed outdoor play area at the entrance to the service.

Staffing

There were seven adults present on the day of inspection. Of these, six were working directly with the children with the registered provider providing support when required.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9 - Management and Recruitment, 11 – Staffing Levels, 19 – Health, welfare and development of child, 23 - Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of

child, 25 – First Aid, 26 – Fire safety measures. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations 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 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.

(7) A registered provider shall ensure that all employees, unpaid workers and contractors are appropriately supervised and provided with appropriate information, and where necessary training, including in relation to the following:

- (a) the policies, procedures and statements of the service specified in Schedule 5;
- (b) Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act, and
- (c) these Regulations.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a)(b) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required who were both on the premises throughout the inspection.
- (c) The service had a clear management structure which identified lines of authority and accountability and with clear roles and responsibilities for all members of staff.
- (2) Following a discussion with the registered provider it was confirmed that three new members of staff commenced working in the service since the last inspection on 12 October 2020. Documentation was reviewed in respect of these and met regulatory requirements as follows:
- (a) Five references from past employers were available.
- (b) One reference from a reputable source was available.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the three staff members.
- (d) Police vetting disclosures were available for the three staff members for when they lived in another state for periods of 6 consecutive months or longer.
- (4) There was evidence that the three adults working directly with the children had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, an equivalent qualification or a letter of eligibility from the DCEDIY.
- (7) In discussion with the registered provider and staff, staff meetings take place regularly. Records of staff meetings were reviewed by the inspection team. Staff discussed induction training which they received. These practices were in line with the Staff Training Policy which was reviewed.

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 Informatio

(1) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.

(2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were thirty-six children attending the service being supervised by six adults on the day of inspection.

(8)(a) The roster demonstrated that the RP had planned to have a minimum of two adults present while the service was open.

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 service had a healthy eating policy in place. Drinking water was available to children throughout the day in both care rooms. Meals were provided at regular intervals; a snack was provided at 10am. Staff stated that children attending on a full day and part time basis bring in their own lunch from home and lunch time took place at 12.30pm. Children were observed setting the table for meals and staff sat with children while they were eating. Staff and children were observed engaging in conversation during meals.

Children were encouraged to use the toilet independently. Tissue stations were available to children in both care rooms.

Both care rooms had cosy corners for children who wished to take a break. A table was also provided in the main corridor where children could take a break from the main group. Children were observed taking part in one to one activities with staff in this area and a child was observed to use the space in this corridor under the supervision of staff when they did not want to participate in circle time.

The service had a behaviour management policy in place. Staff were able to discuss strategies used in the service to positively respond to behaviour. Feelings charts, flip charts and emotions bags were available in both care rooms. Staff were observed to support children making positive choices by speaking to them at their eye-level, referencing the feelings chart and giving them options for what they could play with. These practices were reflected in the policy.

The service had a key person system in place. Staff were able to speak knowledgably about the children and were observed to support children interacting with each other by providing them with language to enable them to share equipment.

Photographs of children and their families were displayed in the care rooms at children's level. Staff discussed individual parent-teacher meetings that take place. Records of these meetings were reviewed. Staff explained how they communicate with parents at drop-off and collection times and how they text, call and email parents as appropriate with individual child or whole service updates.

Staff were observed to manage transitions effectively. A bell was rung to indicate that the children had 5 minutes left of choosing time and a second bell was rung when it was time to tidy up. The staff members in the Sunflower Room sang to the children to explain what was happening next. Children were observed to respond positively to the staff.

Photographs of the local community were displayed in both care rooms at children's level. Staff discussed how they go on regular trips in the local community, for example to the beach and an annual trip to a farm. Records of these outings were reviewed.

There were defined interest areas in both care rooms, which included libraries, home corners, small world area, a shop with materials, construction areas, arts and crafts and a cosy corner. There were low level tables and chairs available for the children in both care rooms to use.

There was a range of developmentally appropriate, challenging and creative resources freely available for children to use. Children were observed painting on an easel, using modelling dough and building complex structures and could access the materials easily.

The service had an outdoor play policy in-place. The outdoor area had a shock absorbent surface, artificial grass and a covered area. The children used the outdoor area at scheduled times as well as when required. All children were observed playing outdoors throughout the day.

Play was observed to be child-led on the day of inspection. Children were facilitated to take the lead and given choice about what activity they took part in. Children were observed to be happy and engaged in their activities.

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 inspectors found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with staff and inspection of the premises that the registered provider had taken the following steps to safeguard children attending:

General Safety:

- The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service or children exiting unsupervised.
- Windows were not accessible to children.
- All storage facilities were inaccessible to children.
- Cleaning agents and medicines were stored safely out of reach of children.
- The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection appeared in good working order.

Infection Control:

- Children were observed to wash their hands after outdoor play and before eating. Liquid soap, warm water and paper towels were available to facilitate hand washing.
- Tissue stations were available in both care rooms.
- Pedal operated bins were available in both care rooms and in the children's bathroom.
- The service had an infection control policy in place. A cleaning schedule was in place to ensure the service, equipment and materials were regularly cleaned. The service appeared clean and well maintained.
- Staff were observed to clean tables in both care rooms in between activities and before children ate.
- Children's packed lunches were stored in the refrigerator.

Safe Sleep:

- Staff stated that one child who attends occasionally sleeps during the day. A record was available to demonstrate that the child was physically monitored while sleeping and sleep checks were documented every ten minutes.

Administration of Medication:

- Staff demonstrated, through discussion, that they were familiar with the procedures and practices in place for the administration of medication in line with the services policy on medication administration. Administration of medication forms were kept in both care rooms and completed forms were stored in the registered provider's office.
- The service had an administration of medication policy in place. Practices in line with this policy were observed on the day of inspection. There were documented care plans available for two children attending the service who required medication. Staff working in the room with the children were aware of the treatment plans and demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the procedures to follow if the medication was required.

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) There was evidence that four members of staff had First Aid Responder training which was in date. A review of four weeks of roster demonstrated that the registered provider makes provisions for a first aid trained staff member to be available at all times.

(2)

(a) First aid boxes were safely stored in easily accessible and visible locations within the service.

(b) First aid boxes were available to the adults and children in the service at all times.

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 monthly fire drills in the service was available for inspection. The last fire drill had been recorded as undertaken on the 22 February 2023.
 - (b) A record of maintenance of fire-fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available for inspection. There was a record to show that firefighting equipment had been serviced on 9 February 2023 and that quarterly maintenance of the smoke alarm system had taken place on 20 December 2022.
- (4) The procedures to be followed during a fire drill and in the event of a fire were displayed by the door in both care rooms in the service. A child-friendly version of the procedures was also displayed in both care rooms.