

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015DY376

Name of Service: Belgrave Montessori School

Address of Service: Holy Trinity Parish Centre, Church Ave, Dublin 6.

Eircode: D06 N9W6

Name of Registered Provider: Pamela Carter

Service type: Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 08/10/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	31	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

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: C. 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

Belgrave Montessori School is one of two services owned and operated by the registered provider. The service is located on the first floor of a Church of Ireland building in a residential area of Rathmines. The service offers early education and care to children between the ages of 2.5-6 years. The service is open thirty-eight weeks of the year, Monday to Friday between 9:00am-12:30pm. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The service has the sole use of two rooms and a large space which is divided to provide a third ECCE room and a designated indoor play space. On the day of the inspection the care rooms were called Front room, Back room and Hall. There is an outdoor space located at the front of the building that the service can access.

Staffing

The service currently employs six staff who all work directly with the children including the deputy person in charge. The registered provider also attended the service on the day of the inspection and was available in supernumerary capacity.

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)(a)(b),(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment
- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25(1),(2)(a)(b) First Aid
- Regulation 26 (1)(a)(b), (4) Fire Safety Measures

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, 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.

(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 inspector arrived. The registered provider arrived in service at 11:00am and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2) The files of all adults who work directly with preschool children were reviewed. The following was observed from a review of seven files:

(a) (b) Twelve written references were available from a past employer and two written references were available from a source other than a past employer. References available for staff were validated by the registered provider.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all seven adults. 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 three adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.
- (4) Documentary evidence was available to show that seven adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

(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) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children in the service. There were thirty-one children being cared for by seven adults when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The person in charge was available in supernumerary capacity offering support in the front and back care rooms.
- (3) The adult child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and throughout the inspection. The following was observed:

Room	Age range	No. of children	Staff available	Staff required
Front room	2.5-3.5 years	7	1	1
Back room	2.5-2.5 years	6	1	1
Hall	3-5 years	18	3	2

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, warm and sensitive manner. The atmosphere within the service remained calm and pleasant throughout the inspection.
- Staff engaged in conversation with children and were responsive to the children's questions and needs. For example, when a child requested a story the staff member immediately joined them selecting a book and invited their peers to join in as they gathered around and sat in a circle.
- The children were supported with self-care practices such as toileting and handwashing.
- Staff were observed to bend down to the children's level and offer age-appropriate guidance for conflict resolution.
- The children were informed of the daily routine and what will happen next which helped provide a clear understanding of their day and a sense of security.
- Staff advised the inspectors of strategies used to help settle new children who had recently joined the service. They placed emphasis on working in partnership with the parents to help the transition.
- Lunch time was a relaxed and sociable time as children sat with their peers and staff and were given ample time to enjoy their food. Children's snacks were brought from home and additional food was available from the service for example apple and cucumber.
- 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 the freedom to choose their own activities, and planned activities facilitated individual, paired and group activities.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b) During the course of the inspection the children did not access the outdoor area. A conversation with staff and management confirmed that children do not use the outdoor area regularly. This limits the children's learning and play opportunities. Time in the outdoors provides for fundamental movements, exploration and experiences exclusive to the outdoor environment.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

The service has changed our timetable to allow for a more definitive outdoor play schedule.

Preventive Action

A meeting with all staff took place on the 11th of October to ensure they are all aware that the children must have outdoor play on a daily basis.

Supporting documentation submitted

- Record of staff meeting.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions taken and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 19 has been addressed.

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 secure when the inspector arrived. The door was monitored with an intercom and staff attended the door to allow access. This prevented unauthorised persons from gaining access.
- Grapes were observed to be sliced in a half reducing the risk of a choking hazard.
- Furniture and materials were observed to be clean and well maintained.
- A handrail was available on the staircase.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of reach of children.

Infection Control:

- Staff advised that lunches with perishable items are stored in a refrigerator.

- Children’s drinks were individually labelled.
- Warm water, dispensed soap and handtowels were available to support effective hand hygiene practices.
- A foot pedal operated bin was available in sanitary area supporting infection control practices.

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.

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 was maintained of all fire drills which occurred in the service. The record showed that fire drills are conducted on a monthly basis. The last fire drill took place on 11th September 2024.
- (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises was available. The certificates reviewed showed that the firefighting equipment had been serviced on 29th May 2024 while the smoke alarms had been serviced on 7th October 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire were clearly displayed in a prominent position by the doorway.