

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL014		
Name of Service:	Avenir School of Montessori Education		
Address of Service:	6 Huntstown Rd, Mulhuddart, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D15 RX05		
Name of Registered Provider:	Viara Gillespie		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	20/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	10	PM No.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child and Family Agency Dublin North, Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15.		
Inspection undertaken by:	E Hosford		
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

Avenir School of Montessori Education is a private service which operates from two care rooms on the ground floor of a residential property in the Dublin 15 area. The sessional service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme and caters for children aged between 2 years 6 months to 6 years from 9am to 12:30pm Monday to Friday. An outdoor area is available to the children to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service is operated by the registered provider as a single-handed service. A staff member was present employed under the access and inclusion (AIM) scheme. The service also has an emergency contact person who is available and familiar with the service in the event of an emergency.

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 and safety. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4) and (6A),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1)(2)(8)(a),

Regulation 15 Record of a pre-school child (1)(a),(b),(c),(d),(e),(f),(g),(h) and (i),

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials,
Regulation 25 First Aid and
Regulation 26 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, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

(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.

(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”

Compliance Information

(2)(a) The following references were available from a past employer.

- One written reference was available for the registered provider.
- Two validated written references were available for one staff member.
- One validated written reference was available for the emergency contact.

(b) The following references were available from a source other than a past employer.

- One written reference was available for the registered provider.
- One validated written reference was available for the emergency contact.

(2)(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider, staff member and emergency contact person. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available for one staff member who had resided outside of the jurisdiction for more than 6 months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that the registered provider, staff member and emergency contact person held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6A) One staff member was employed under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM).

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.

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

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were two adults working with ten children aged between 2.6-5 years of age.

(3) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times as there were two adults caring for ten children aged between 2.6-5 years of age.

(8)(c) The registered provider ensured that a second person who was familiar with the service was available at all times to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

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

On review of 11 children’s files the following particulars were recorded.

- (a) The name and date of birth of each child.
- (b) The date on which each child first attended the service.
- (c) The records had a section for documenting the date when children ceased attending the service.
- (d) The names, addresses and telephone number of parents were recorded and information where parents can be contacted during the hours of operation of the service.
- (e) Names and contact details of other adults who were authorised to collect children.
- (f) The documentation available supported the recording of specific illnesses, allergies, disabilities, and dietary preferences for children.
- (g) The name and telephone number of the child’s medical practitioner.
- (h) Parents had indicated which immunisations their children had received.
- (i) There was written parental consent for medical treatment of children in the event of an emergency.

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 service was bright, spacious, and well maintained. Rooms were decorated in neutral colours with the children’s artwork displayed on the walls. Children’s independence was supported with low level hooks for hanging their coats and lowlevel sinks within the sanitary facility for handwashing. Suitably sized tables and chairs were available for meals and table-top activities.
- A rest area was provided consisting of soft matting, child size sofa and books. The children were free to move between both rooms which were laid out with low level shelving making toys visible and accessible. Toys and materials were varied and suitable to the age and developmental stages of the children; these included Montessori materials, blocks, puzzles, art, and craft materials, play kitchen, cars, trucks, and floor games.

- A partially sheltered outdoor area was accessible to the children throughout the session with a well-resourced sand tray and play kitchen. A larger outdoor area was used for activities such as planting and digging. Ride on toys, cars and a climbing frame were available to promote gross motor activity.

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:

- Entrances and exits were secured to prevent unauthorised access or children leaving unsupervised
- Cleaning products were stored out of reach of children.
- The arrival and departure time of each staff member and child to the service was documented daily in the service roll book.
- Cleaning materials were stored out of reach of the children. No hazards or safety issues were observed in the care rooms or outdoor area. The service had evidence to demonstrate that risk assessments of the care rooms and equipment was completed to identify any issues that may cause injury to a staff member or child.

Infection Control:

- The premises were clean and well maintained. Sanitary facilities were appropriately equipped. Children washed their hands after outdoor play, before eating and after toileting.
- Waste was managed appropriately with pedal operated, lidded bins The registered provider maintained a daily and weekly cleaning schedule to ensure that regular cleaning of the service took place.
- Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid soap and paper towels were available at the wash hand basin used by the children.
- Children's food from home that contained perishable items were refrigerated on arrival to the service. Tables were cleaned prior to snack.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were kept clear for safe evacuation if needed.
- Records showed that fire drills are undertaken monthly.

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) One staff member held First Aid Responder (FAR) certification with an expiry date of September 2024.

(2) The first aid boxes within the service were suitably equipped

(a) The first aid boxes were stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises.

(b) The first aid boxes were available to the children 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 was available detailing fire drills carried out in the service. The most recent fire drill was dated 15 March 2024.

(b) A record was available showing the number and type of firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm in the service. Records showed that maintenance was carried out on the firefighting equipment on the 10 November 2023 and the smoke alarm in March 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position.