

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL057		
Name of Service:	Castleknock Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Castlecourt, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D15 YT65		
Name of Registered Provider:	Marie McKenna		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	07/10/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	20	PM 8
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Á Dunne		
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

Castleknock Montessori School is located in Dublin 15. A part time service is provided to children, between 9am to 1pm and a sessional service is provided to children between 1pm and 4pm, Monday to Friday. The service is located at the rear of a commercial centre and consists of two care rooms – Montessori room 1 and Montessori room 2, an office, a storeroom, and sanitary facilities. The service has an outdoor play area to the front of the premises that children have access to.

Staffing

On the day of inspection, the registered provider who works in the service, was present with two staff members. An external contractor is also employed to teach French to the children once a week.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations as follows:

Regulation 9 Management and recruitment (2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4)

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2)(3)

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child

Regulation 25 First Aid (1) (2)(a)(b)

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1)(a)(b) (4)

Regulation 28 Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child. The scope of the inspection was the two care rooms of the service - Montessori room 1 and Montessori room 2.

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 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.

Compliance Information

(2) On discussion with the registered provider, there are four adults employed in the service to include the registered provider, two staff and one external contractor.

The files of four adults were reviewed as part of the inspection.

(a)(b) Eight written and validated references were available in relation to four adults, from a past employer or a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for four adults. The service has also adhered to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside the State for longer than six months as an adult.

(4) Documentation was available to show that the three adults 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.

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.

(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)(2)(3) On the day of inspection, in the morning, two adults worked with 20 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years from 9.00am to 9.30 am and 10.30 to 1pm and three adults worked with 20 children aged between 2 years 8 months and 5 years, between 9.30 am and 10.30am, in the afternoon two adults worked with eight children aged between 2 years 8 months and 4 years, between 1.00pm and 4.00pm, with ratios being maintained.

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 two rooms were bright and laid out in an inviting manner to enable children to explore their environment, with play materials easily accessible on low shelving.
- A range of play materials and equipment were organised, well-resourced and easily accessible. The service uses the Montessori learning approach with Montessori materials and equipment available to the children. There were also play based equipment and materials present and available to the children.

- All the materials and equipment were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending each room nurturing children's independence, ability to make decisions, and develop their play opportunities.
- The furniture provided in each of the two care rooms was low level and suitable to the needs and age of the children. There were a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played, completed table tops activities and when all children joined together to eat their lunch in the Montessori 2 room at 12pm
- Cosy areas with a couch and a soft chair for rest and relaxation were present.
- The use of family pictures of the children and their extended family displayed on the walls of both classrooms, reinforced each child's identity and belonging within the service. This can provide familiarity and comfort to children.
- The children engaged in outdoor play while under the supervision of two adults. The surface was artificial grass with play equipment of slides, see saws, a tunnel, balls, streamers, skittles and cones.

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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspector observed, the entrance gate was secure.
- Access to the service via a door was monitored by staff to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and preventing children from leaving the service unsupervised. The outdoor play area was secure, while children played outside.
- Attendance records were present, completed and accurate.
- The play equipment and materials observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order.
- The temperature of the Montessori 1 room was recorded as 20.8°C at 10.35am and of the Montessori 2 room was recorded as 21.3°C at 10.50am, within the recommended ambient temperature of 18 - 22 °C.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed to wash their hands after toilet visits, after outdoor play and before lunch.
- Children lunches which were brought from home were refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of contaminated items.
- The service was visually clean with cleaning records and risk assessments completed daily and available.

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) The service provided evidence that one adult trained in First Aid Response was available to the children attending the pre-school.
- (2) (a) (b) A first aid box was stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position in office off the Montessori 2 room and was available to the adults responsible for the children.

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.
- (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 written record was reviewed by the inspector for fire drills completed and the last fire drill was recorded as being carried out on the 3rd of October 2024.
- (b) The number type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment were last serviced in July 2024 and the smoke alarms were last serviced on 12th March 2024.
- (4) The fire drill procedure was displayed on the walls of the Montessori room 1, the office and the hallway of the premises and observed by the Inspector.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

Evidence of insurance cover was available to demonstrate there was cover for a maximum of 22 children with an expiry date of 27th November 2024.