

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL084		
Name of Service:	Discovery Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Collegefort, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	D15 DTH6		
Name of Registered Provider:	Marie Louise Grace		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	31/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	48	PM 19
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate 2 nd Floor, Unit 4/5 The Nexus Building Blanchardstown Corporate Park Ballycoolin Dublin 15 D15 CF9K		
Inspection undertaken by:	T. Nelson		
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

Discovery Montessori School is a full day care service located in a residential area in Castleknock, Co. Dublin. Established since 2004, Discovery Montessori School delivers early childhood care and education to children aged 2½ to 6 years of age. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme, which is delivered on a sessional basis from 8.30am-11.30am and offer a part-time service from 8.30am – 1.00pm. The service also provides for school age childcare in the afternoon.

This purpose-built premises is a two-story, detached building. The ground floor comprises of two care rooms, to include the Green Pod and Yellow pod each catering for full time children aged 2½ to 6 years old. There is a kitchen, a sensory room, an office and sanitary accommodation on this floor. The first floor has four care rooms, to include Red Pods 1 and 2 and Blue Pods 1 and 2, catering for sessional and part-time children aged 2½ to 6 years old. There is further sanitary accommodation on this floor.

The outdoor play area is situated to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The service employs thirteen staff including the registered provider who manages the oversight of the service and provides cover where needed across the rooms, ten staff who work directly with the children, an afterschool staff member and a cleaner. There were eleven staff present of the day of the inspection, including the registered provider, ten childcare staff and an afterschool worker.

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. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9(1)(2)(a)(b)(c)(d),(4); 11(1)(4)(8); 16(1)(h)(i)(j), 21, 22 and 23.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under the following:

- Regulation 16(1)(h)(i)(j) – Record in relation to Preschool children

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

(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*

(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) The service had a designated person in charge and named person to deputise as required.

(b) The person in charge was present during the inspection.

The files of the thirteen staff were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

(2)

(a) Twenty-one validated written references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Five validated written references were available from a source other than a past employer.

(c) Completed Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of the thirteen staff members.

(d) Six adults who had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult had international police vetting from that state available for inspection.

(4) The eleven staff 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, Equality, Disability, Integration 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.

(4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-

(a) a sessional pre-school service, and

(b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).

Compliance Information

(1) There were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children as there were nine adults working with 48 children in the morning, and three adults working with 19 children in the afternoon.

(4) The correct adult/child ratio was maintained in the service throughout the inspection at all times. The adult child ratios when the inspector arrived to the service at 9.15am were;

- Green Pod - 2 adults to 14 children aged between 3-5 years.
- Yellow Pod - 2 adults to 6 children aged between 3-5 years.
- Blue Pod 1 - 2 adults to 7 children aged between 3-5 years.
- Blue Pod 2 - 1 adult to 8 children aged between 3 -5 years.
- Red Pod 1 - 1 adult to 7 children aged between 3 -5 years.
- Red Pod 2 - 1 adult to 6 children aged between 3 -5 years.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

(h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;

(i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;

(j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;

Compliance Information

(1)(h) Attendance records detailing the arrival and departure of the children on a daily basis were maintained in a contemporaneous manner.

(i) A record was maintained of the staff roster which was reflective of the staff present on the day.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(j) The registered provider did not ensure a record in writing was maintained for the administration of medication. This was not in line with best practice on the safe administration of medication or the service policy on the administration of medication.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

A new administration of medication record form was created and is now being implemented in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copy of medication consent form.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified under Regulation 16((1)(j) has been adequately addressed.

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 furniture available in the rooms was suitable to the age and stage of the children attending and was observed to be well maintained, durable and easy to clean.
- There was a range of play materials and equipment available to the children according to their age and stage of development, to include: arts and crafts materials, home areas with associated props; range of jigsaws; range of construction toys; sorting and stacking toys; range of toys for transporting such as cars and trains with tracks, small world play toys, sensory equipment.
- Equipment and materials were positioned and grouped according to areas of interests and were laid out in pleasing displays which were visible and accessible to the children.
- The equipment in each of the rooms and the outdoor area was themed according to an identified emergent interest of the children. These themes were extended throughout the space through visible displays, role play equipment and props to extend existing equipment. For example, the garden centre theme in Blue Pod 2 which had a broad range of flowers, gardening equipment, petals, flowerpots and grass rugs available throughout room.
- Equipment available facilitated all types of play and learning and reflected the identity of the children and families attending thereby facilitating inclusion.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- The service had a healthy food policy and the practices observed were in line with this policy.
- Adequate quantities of food and suitable portion sizes were available for the children. The food was suitable for the age and stage of development of the child, and there was enough food supplied to cover the number of hours the child is in the care of the service.
- On the day of the inspection the children ate a snack at 10.45am which was provided by the parents, a hot meal of chicken goujons, sauté potatoes and carrots at 1.00pm which was prepared by an external catering company, a snack at 2.30pm which was provided by parents, and an afternoon meal of sweet waffles, yogurt and banana which was prepared in the onsite kitchen. Staff discussed how alternative diets are catered for.
- The mealtime experience was observed to be a pleasant experience promoting independence and social skills.
- Drinking water was freely available in the care rooms.

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 to the service was secured with an electronic lock up high out of reach of the children to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises and to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised. Entry and exit of children was monitored and managed by staff.
- The outdoor play area was secured with an electronic lock system in place on the external gate.
- Cleaning products and hazardous equipment were stored up high out of reach of children.

- The kitchen, storage presses and the hot water cylinder press were inaccessible to children on the day of the inspection.
- Window restrictors were in place on all windows.
- Safety gates were fitted at the top and bottom of the staircase which was well lit with appropriate handrails in place.

Infection Control:

- The premises was in a clean and hygienic condition and documented up to date cleaning records were available and displayed in the premises.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid soap and single use hand towels were available at all wash hand basins used by the children and the staff members.
- Staff were observed supporting children to hand wash after outdoor play and before mealtimes.
- Lidded, foot pedal operated bins were available in the care rooms.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency exits were unobstructed.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Blind cords on the windows in Red Pod 2 and Blue Pod 2 were not secured and were accessible to the children. This posed a risk of injury to the children.
2. Grapes in the snacks provided by the parents in Green Pod 1 were observed not to be quartered or halved. This posed a potential choking hazard for children. It is acknowledged that staff addressed this issue immediately when it was brought to their attention by the inspector.

Infection Control:

3. The nappy disposal system in use in the first-floor sanitary accommodation required repeated hand contact with the disposal unit. This did not support effective infection control.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Blind cords have been secured on all windows.
2. The Eating/food policy was updated, teachers and parents were informed of the amended policy.

Infection Control:

3. A foot pedal controlled unit was introduced for all nappy disposal systems in the setting.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Photographic evidence was submitted.
2. Updated policy submitted.

Infection Control:

3. Photographic evidence was submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the action and evidence submitted. The non-compliances identified under Regulation 23 have been adequately addressed.