

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL111
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Name of Service:	Hartstown Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Hartstown Community Centre, Hartstown, Dublin 15.
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Eircode:	D15 CY60
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Name of Registered Provider:	Maria Gabriela Bujoreanu
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/12/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	Not applicable.
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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:	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

Hartstown Montessori School is a private childcare service which operates from a prefabricated single storey building to the rear of the Hartstown community centre premises. The service provides sessional education and care to children aged from 2 to 5 years of age. The services offers two sessions, a morning session from from 9am to 12pm and an afternoon session from 12:30pm to 3:30pm Monday to Friday. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education scheme (ECCE). The premises includes a saniatry area and access to an enclosed outdoor area at the side of the building.

Staffing

The service employs four staff members including the registered provider and three childcare staff. The registered provider attended the service on the day of the inspection.

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(2)(a)(b)(c)(d), (4) Management and Recruitment

- Regulation 11(1),(3) Staffing Levels
- Regulation 15(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h)(i), (3)(c) Record of a Pre-school Child
- Regulation 19(1)(b) Health, Welfare and Development of child
- Regulation 23 Safeguarding the Health, Safety and Welfare of the Child
- Regulation 25 First Aid

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
- (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.

(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.

(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 a named person to deputise as required. The deputy person in charge was in the service when the inspector arrived.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place, and staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities.

(2) The files of all staff members were reviewed. The registered provider had completed the following checks:

- (a) Eight written and validated references were available from a past employer.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all adults employed by the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Documentary evidence showed that four adults had lived outside of the state for six months or more as adults and international police vetting from that state was available for inspection.

(3) A review of records demonstrated that the preemployment procedures specified in paragraph (2) were carried out prior to any person being appointed in their role.

(4) The three staff and registered provider 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.*
- (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

The registered provider ensured the following:

- (1)(3) On the day of the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children. There were two adults available to 7 children aged between 2 years 8 months - 5 years old when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. The registered provider also attended the service on the day of the inspection and was available in a supernumerary capacity to offer support if required.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

(1) A sample of ten record forms of children who currently attend the service were reviewed. These records contained all the information required under (a) to (i) above.

(3)(c) On the day of the inspection a record in writing in writing was available for review by the inspector.

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. Appropriate nonverbal communication such as low tones, eye level contact, touch and other strategies were observed. Verbal strategies included clear instruction on what was going to happen next giving clarity on their routine. These strategies can facilitate emotional and social development in young children.
- The atmosphere within the service was calm and pleasant and the experiences and activities provided to the children attending were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children.
- Mealtime was observed to be a sociable experience for the children. Children lunches were supplied from home, and staff were observed to join the children at the tables and engage in conversation. A drinks station was available within the room throughout the morning.
- Children's self-care skills were encouraged by the staff who assisted with nasal hygiene and gave regular reminders for toileting.
- Staff discussed engagement with families through daily conversations. On the week of the inspection a roster was displayed showing the parents who were scheduled to visit and spend time in the service. A Christmas market was laid out as activity stations throughout the care room for the parents and children to enjoy.

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 unannounced, and staff attended the door to allow access. This prevented children from exiting the premises unsupervised and prohibited unauthorised persons from gaining entry.
- Equipment and furniture in the care room were well maintained and suitable for use.
- There were no trailing flexes observed.

Infection Control:

- Staff disinfected tables following a sensory activity.
- Foot pedal operated bins were present in the care room and sanitary area.

Fire Safety:

- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed on the wall near the entrance.
- Attendance records were maintained in a timely manner and updated as children arrived at the service supporting safe evacuation of the premises in the event of an emergency.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

The garden area was poorly maintained and contained a number of hazards which posed a risk of injury to children. The following was observed:

1. A fence panel had nails protruding.
2. Stagnant water was present in two uncovered sand trays and a bike basket.
3. A tricycle had a handle broken off exposing two rusted rods.
4. Large nettles were present in the grass.
5. There was a number of large rocks and stones in the grass which posed a trip hazard.
6. Cleaning products were observed accessible to children placed on the edge of a low-level sink and a window sill in the care room.

7. Water temperatures in the sinks accessible to children in the care room and sanitary area posed a risk of injury. The following was observed:

- At 9:45am the care room sink was 44.5°C
- At 9:53am the sink in the sanitary area was 44.8°C

Infection Control:

8. Toilet roll was placed on the cistern in the sanitary area and was not hygienically dispensed this posed a risk of cross contamination.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. **Corrective action:** The management of the centre the been contacted and the nails have been removed.
2. **Corrective action:** All garden equipment has been emptied from water and cleaned properly.
3. **Corrective action:** Broken toys have been removed from the area.
4. **Corrective action:** Centre management was contacted; the grass has been cut, and the nettles have been removed.
5. **Corrective action:** Large rocks have been removed from the area.

Preventive action: The area will be checked every day before children go outside.

6. **Corrective action:** Staff have been reminded to storage cleaning products in their designated area, on a high shelf.

Preventive action: A notice has been put in the room to remind staff members about proper storage of cleaning products.

7. **Corrective action:** Centre management was contacted, and the water temperature has been reset from the thermostat under the sink.

Preventive action: Water temperature is being recorded each day in the morning and in the afternoon, both in the care room and in the sanitary area.

Infection Control:

8. Corrective action: A toilet paper dispenser has been added to the bathroom and the toilet paper is placed inside at all times.

Preventive action: Staff members will check every day that the toilet paper is placed inside the dispenser.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

- Daily garden checklist.
- Photographic evidence.
- Staff notice.
- Water temperature record sheet.

Infection Control:

- Photographic evidence.

Summary Comment

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

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) A suitably equipped first aid box was stored safely out of reach of children, readily available and easily accessible to staff if required at any time.