

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL234
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	New Horizons Montessori School
-------------------------	--------------------------------

Address of Service:	13 Forest Park, Rivervalley, Swords, Co. Dublin
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	K67 PD29
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Linda Rock
-------------------------------------	------------

Service type:	Sessional
----------------------	-----------

Date of Inspection:	17/06/2024
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	N/A
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	-----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Coyle
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

New horizons Montessori school is a privately owned preschool service established in 2001 and is located in Swords, County Dublin. The preschool service is operated from a purpose-built room adjacent to the registered providers residence. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children from 2 years 8 months until they commence attendance at primary school participating in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme from 09:00am to 12 Midday Monday to Friday with children availing of an additional 15 minutes from 08:45 am for an additional fee. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme offering preschool sessions Monday to Friday for 38 weeks of the year. An enclosed outdoor area is available on the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider does not work directly with the children attending the service and has employed a staff member to oversee the day to day running of the service. The service employs 4 staff members including 2 staff members who provide relief on a regular basis.

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 regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25 and 26. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 – record of pre-school child.

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 person in charge, staff member 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 a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The designated person in charge was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced on the morning of the inspection.

The files for 4 staff members including 2 relief staff members were reviewed.

(2) (a)&(b) Two validated written references were available for 2 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for the 4 staff members whose files were reviewed. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years in respect of 3 of the 4 Garda vetting disclosures reviewed.

(d) International police vetting was available for 1 staff member who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that 3 staff members whose files were reviewed and who work directly with the children in the service, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Non-Compliance Information

(2) (a)&(b) There were no validated written references available for 2 staff members whose files were reviewed.

(d) International police vetting was not available for 1 staff member who resided outside of the Irish jurisdiction for longer than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was not available to confirm that 1 staff member whose files was reviewed and who works directly with the children in the service, held an appropriate childcare qualification at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2) (a) & (b) References are printed off and filed for the 3 members of staff. Copies are attached.

(d) Manager had attempted on 2 previous occasions to get the appropriate vetting from the Swedish police force without success. The staff member has recently retired so will no longer require this documentation.

(4) The registered provider stated that the staff member was no longer working in the service.

Preventive Action

(2) (a) & (b) Recruitment policy already identified the requirement to collect references for each staff member.

However, manager has now added an additional line to their recruitment checklist to ensure that these references are added to the appropriate file.

Supporting documentation submitted

Two written references for 3 staff members

Summary Comment

Outstanding references were submitted for review by the registered provider and were found to be adequate.

The registered provider stated that one staff member was no longer working in the service and the non-compliances in relation to the police vetting and outstanding qualification no longer applied.

The non-compliances have been addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) At all times there was an adequate number of staff working with the children.

(2) The adult to child ratio was correct in the service when the inspector arrived unannounced and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed during the inspection:

- There were 13 pre-school children aged 3 years 9 months to 4 years 11 months being cared for by 2 staff members.

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

(1) A sampling process was used in relation to the children’s records. All 6 sampled registration forms were appropriately completed with the required information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) in this regulation.

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-

- (a) each child’s learning, development and well-being is facilitated within the daily life of the pre-school service through the provision of the appropriate activities, interaction, materials and equipment, having regard to the age and stage of development of the child, and*

Compliance Information

(1) (a) The following observations are examples on how each child’s learning, development and well-being was observed being facilitated during the inspection:

Basic needs:

- When the inspector arrived unannounced at the preschool, the children were engaged in play and activity. The children appeared to be familiar with their daily routine, verbally pre-empting what was happening next such as snack time, circle time and garden time.
- Snack time was observed to be a relaxed and sociable occasion as evidenced in staff members sitting and chatting with the children while they enjoyed their morning snack, with plenty of time allowed for the children to eat without rushing. The children's water bottles were accessible should they require a drink at any time throughout the session.
- The children's independence was supported in using the toilet, putting on their coats and tidying away after play.
- The children enjoyed time outdoors in the outdoor area to the rear of the service.

Supporting relationships:

- The staff members were observed interacting with the children in a warm and caring manner. The staff members praised children for their behaviours especially when they were helpful to others, took turns and shared resources.
- The children were observed to be confident and relaxed in their environment and naturally formed small groups and engaged in a range of tabletop and floor play activities during the inspection.
- The staff members were observed taking the opportunities to interact with parents and guardians at collection time and update them on their children's day in the service.

Physical and material environment:

- In the care room resources were easily available and accessible on low level shelving. The children demonstrated familiarity with navigating their environment to access the toys and play resources they chose to play with.
- The indoor environment was bright airy and welcoming for the children. The room was equipped with a range of Montessori materials all of which were readily accessible to the children. The children were observed to choose the materials that they wanted to play with and were well supported in extending their play experiences by the staff members present.
- A wide range of books were provided on low level shelving to enhance the children's literacy and reading skills. Throughout the inspection children enjoyed having stories read to them.

- An outdoor play area to the rear of the service was available to the children. The area was surfaced with artificial grass, a climbing frame and small see saw were available to the children in addition to ride on toys. Resources were also brought outside from the care room for the children to use. All of the children present on inspection enjoyed time in the outdoor area on the day of inspection.

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 external doors and side gate in the outdoor play area were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service.
- The water temperature in the sanitary accommodation in the service did not exceed the recommended maximum water temperature of 43°C. This reduced the risk of scalding for the children in attendance.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled running warm water, liquid soap and paper towels were provided at the wash hand basins in the sanitary accommodation of the service to support effective handwashing.
- Children’s snacks, which were provided by parents, were stored appropriately in the fridge.
- The equipment, play materials and facilities were in a clean and hygienic condition.

Administration of Medication:

- No child required medication to be administered on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Fire drills were conducted on a monthly basis in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 1 staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice ‘EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting’.

Administration of Medication:

2. A detailed care plan was not available for a child in the service who may require the administration of emergency medication in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

General Safety:

1. The staff member has recently retired so registered provider will no longer need to renew this vetting.

Administration of Medication:

2. All permanent staff were trained in the delivery of the auto-injector pen. Documentation for the administration of this medication were available and agreed with parents in the event of it being required for the child. A video supporting the administration of this medication will now be shown to all staff both permanent and temporary (substitutes) in advance of the school year.

Training will be repeated on an annual basis in advance of the school year.

Summary Comment

The evidence submitted by the registered provider in relation to regulation 23 - Safeguarding health, safety and welfare of child has been reviewed and accepted.

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 person trained in first aid including first aid responder (FAR) training was immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service as evidenced in the staff roster and the in-date FAR certification provided for inspection.

(2)(a) and (b) The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions on the premises, out of the reach of 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) Records were available in the service to demonstrate that regular fire drills take place. The most recent fire drill was recorded to have been carried out 07/06/24.

(4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were on display in the care rooms and corridors of the service.

Non-Compliance Information

(b) An up-to-date record was not available for the maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The record that was available stated that the last maintenance check had been completed in January 2023.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action & Preventive Action

(b) An appointment has been arranged with the Fire Safety Officer to complete the maintenance work required. A copy of the new certificate will be submitted as soon as this visit has been completed.

Manager has set up an annual reminder from the date of this visit to ensure that the annual review of their fire equipment is completed at the appropriate time.

Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance certificate for both the maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarm.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has forwarded the maintenance certificates for both the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms the regulatory requirement for regulation 26 - Fire safety measures has been addressed.