

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL298
Name of Service:	The Children's House Montessori School
Address of Service:	55 Roselawn Road, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
Eircode:	D15 VN50
Name of Registered Provider:	Jack Freaney
Service type:	Sessional
Date(s) of Inspection:	12/06/2024
No of pre-school children:	AM 7

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin
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

The Children’s House Montessori is a sessional service located in a residential area of Dublin. The service is on the grounds of the registered provider’s home. There is a dedicated room in the garden with direct access to the outdoor play area. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years old, from Monday to Friday between 9:30 am to 1:00pm. The service participates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider employs four staff members to work in the service; two of whom are employed under the Access and Inclusion Model, one administrative staff and the person in charge who oversees the day to day running of the service. On the day of the inspection the registered provider, person in charge and two staff members were present. The registered provider does not work in the service.

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 inspections may also focus on other areas as required. The following regulations were reviewed on the day of inspection:

Regulation 9 (1)(2)(4)-Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11(1)(3)-Staffing Levels

Regulation 15- Record of a Pre-School Child

Regulation 16- Record in Relation to Pre-School Service

Regulation 19 (a) -Health, Welfare and Development of Child

Regulation 23- Safeguarding the Health, Safety, and Welfare of Child

Regulation 25- First Aid

Regulation 26- Fire Safety Measures

Regulation 28- Insurance

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under Regulation 15, Regulation 19 and Regulation 23.

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, person in charge, 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.

(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 needed.

(b) The designated person in charge was present when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in the service and staff were aware of their own role and responsibility.

(2) A review of the roster and conversation with management showed that there are currently five adults employed to work in the service including the registered provider and one office administrator.

(a) Six written and verified references were available from recent past employers.

(b) Four written and verified references were available from a reputable source other than a past employer.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all the five adults. 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 not required as no staff member had lived outside of the state for six months or more as an adult.

(4) Evidence was available to show that the three staff members who work directly with the children held 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.

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

(1)(3) The registered provider ensured there is an adequate number of adults working directing with the children and ratios were maintained at all times. Evidenced by the following:

- There were three adults working directly with seven children aged 3-6 years attending on a sessional basis during the morning.

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 nine children's files were reviewed as part of the inspection. The registered provider ensured that the information required under (a)-(i) was maintained for each child.
- (3)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

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:*
- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
 - (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
 - (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
 - (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
 - (e) the facilities available;*
 - (f) the opening hours and fees;*
 - (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
 - (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;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that there was a record kept in writing of the information (a-i) in relation to the service.

(j) Seven administration of medication records were reviewed and all information was completed in full.

(k) The person in charge confirmed there were no accident and incident occurrences in 2024. The inspector reviewed 10 forms from the previous year and all information was completed in full.

(3) All records and documentation requested by the inspector were available for review.

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)

Basic Needs:

- Children brought snacks from home. The service has a healthy eating policy which is shared with parents/guardians in advance of enrolment. Children's own drinks were available within their reach throughout the session.
- Identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a 'Family Wall' display, a 'Birthday Wall' display, 'Things I like to do' display and the children's artwork was displayed throughout

the care room. In addition, each child had their own personalised coat hook labelled with their name and accessible at their level.

- There was a cozy area with a soft mat, cushions and books for rest and relaxation present.
- Children were observed to access the outdoor play area this supports their social, cognitive, gross and fine motor development.

Supporting Relationships:

- The service used an electronic application to communicate with parents and update them on their child's activities. The inspector observed staff greeting parents at collection time and updating parents verbally on their child's day in the service.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children engaged well with tidying up, putting items away independently and waiting their turn to wash their hands before snack time.
- Staff were observed sitting with children during snack time. This facilitated snack time to be a social occasion for children to engage with peers and staff.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The care room in the service was designed with the age and stage of development having been taken into consideration. Children were observed to take part in free play and group work. The layout of the room facilitated these choices as the toys and equipment were laid out on low level shelving and were visible and accessible to the children to enable the children to explore and develop their play opportunities. For example, Montessori materials supporting the areas of practical life, sensorial, language, maths and culture were available.
- There was a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care room.
- An outdoor area was available for the children to play. The equipment and toys available included a vegetable planting box with gardening tools, a swinging bench, two playhouses, two slides, a football goal and balls providing learning opportunities for children.

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 side entrance gate leading to the main door of the service was secure when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service. This prevented unauthorised access and exit of children.
- The outdoor play area was secured with a surrounding wall and was securely gated to prevent unauthorised access and exit of children.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children.
- All plug sockets accessible to children had socket protector covers.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely out of the reach to the children.
- Staff were aware of choking hazards, including grapes. Staff discussed how they check each container at lunchtime for uncut grapes and any potential choking hazards.

Infection Control:

- The sanitary accommodation was equipped with warm running water, liquid soap, and hand drying facilities. Children and staff were observed to wash their hands throughout the inspection, including before meals, after outdoor play and after toileting.
- Pedal bins were evident within the care room and sanitary area.
- The children's lunches were observed to be refrigerated.

Administration of Medication:

- The service had individual care plans on display to identify the medication requirements and procedure in the event of an emergency for children who had an identified allergy and/or diagnosed medical condition. In discussion, staff were aware of the procedures to follow as per the care plans.
- Emergency medication was located and safely stored inaccessible to children in the care-room in the original box and was clearly labelled with the child's name.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This ensured the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency evacuation.

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 a person trained in First Aid Responder training was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school as evidenced by the staff attendance book.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and was safely stored in an easily accessible and conspicuous position on the premises and was available to the adults caring for 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.

(2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-

(c) an authorised person.

(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) Documentation was available to demonstrate that fire drills were practiced monthly. The last fire drill took place on 7 June 2024.

(b) The number, type and maintenance record of the firefighting equipment was up to date. Fire extinguishers were last serviced in February 2024. Smoke alarms were serviced in February 2024.

(2)(c) Records were open to inspection by an authorised person. All records requested by the inspector were available for review.

(4) Procedures detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed in a prominent position.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured the service was insured. The insurance certificate provided for review showed cover for eleven children and an expiry date of 27 March 2025.