

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015FL304
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<b>Name of Service:</b>	The Green Gate Montessori
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<b>Address of Service:</b>	1 The Grove, Skerries Rock, Skerries, Co. Dublin
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<b>Eircode:</b>	K34 E767
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<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Sarah O'Kelly
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<b>Service type:</b>	Sessional
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<b>Date(s) of Inspection:</b>	23/04/2024
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<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	15	PM	N/A
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<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Early Years Inspectorate, 180-189 Lakeshore Drive, Airside Business Park, Swords, Co Dublin K67 Y5C6.
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	S. Cully
<b>Title:</b>	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).

<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not applicable
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### Description of service

The Green Gate Montessori is a privately owned preschool service located in a residential area in North County Dublin. The preschool service is operated by the registered provider offering a preschool session to children from the ages of 2 years 8 months to 6 years Monday to Friday from 9.30am – 12.30pm and participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. The preschool is adjoined to a private residence and has its own entrance. The service consists of one care room, sanitary facilities an office and an enclosed outdoor play area.

### Staffing

The registered provider is present in the service on a daily basis and employs three staff members to work directly with the children. The registered provider is available to work with the children in the event of staff absences. On the day of the inspection, the registered provider and 1 staff member were working with the children.

### 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 inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

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.

(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 registered provider was the designated person in charge of the service and there was a named person appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced at 10.30am on the morning of the inspection and was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

On the day of inspection, a total of 4 staff files including the registered providers file were reviewed.

(2)(a) & (b) There were 2 written and validated references available for the 3 staff members and the registered provider whose files were reviewed.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all 4 adults whose files were reviewed. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) International police vetting was available as required for 1 adult who had lived outside the State as adults for more than 6 consecutive months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to demonstrate that all 3 staff members and the registered provider who worked directly with the children in the preschool service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 - 8 on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) 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) There was an adequate number of staff working with the children on the day of the inspection.

(3) The adult to child ratio was correct when the inspector arrived and were appropriately maintained in the service throughout the inspection. There were 2 adults caring for 15 children aged 3 years 4 months to 4 years 11 months.

### 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 the children were actively engaged in a range of child-led activities and play. Soon after, the early years practitioners gave notice of the upcoming transition to snack time, and the children participated in putting away materials and preparing the room. This demonstrated that the children were familiar with their daily routine and responsibilities.
- The service operates a rolling snack time where one table and several chairs are available for children who are ready to eat while others participated in an activity with a practitioner. One of the practitioners supervised rolling snack and provided them with a sociable experience chatting to the children throughout. The children were confident in negotiating who was next to sit at the table, and when one child expressed, they wanted to sit to eat sooner they were facilitated to do so. The children appeared to enjoy this approach, allowing them time in smaller groups to eat, talk or engage in activity with a practitioner.
- Photographs of the children participating in previous learning experiences, their artwork and family photographs were displayed throughout the care room. Displaying images of the children and their families and their work supports them to feel safe a sense of identity and belonging in their learning environment.
- Children's independent skills were supported through practice and resources that facilitated them to contribute to the daily running of their preschool session. At the entrance to the preschool there was a daily registration board where children could check themselves in and out of preschool. The class rules had been decided by the children and were on display. A 'helpers chart' assigned daily tasks to children, that the children were happy to participate in.

- There was a planned gymnastics activity that the children were mentioning throughout the morning. The practitioners made space in the room and provided a mat where each child was given time to demonstrate their gymnastic skills. This activity supported children's movement and gross motor skills and was a suitable alternative to outdoor play, as the garden was unavailable to the children on the morning of the inspection.

### **Supporting relationships around children:**

- Both practitioners working with the children were observed to provide the children with sensitive, nurturing and kind interactions. They demonstrated familiarity of the children's needs, personalities and experiences by making subtle changes to the routine when required for certain children or recalling previous events and activities the children had in the service or at home. The practitioners also spoke about the children in a positive manner showing respect for their individuality. The practitioners also supported the children to communicate together and resolve arising issues.
- The children demonstrated that they felt a sense of belonging and connectedness within the service and with the adults present. They called the adults by name and looked to them for guidance, reassurance, or help. The children's requests were met with supportive and empathetic approaches. The children also felt comfortable in expressing their ideas and thoughts, sharing stories and suggestions with the adults throughout the morning. Documents on display evidenced children's input was important to curriculum topics, as anecdotes and suggestions were recorded and used to inform plans.
- The service's ethos supported partnership with the community. During the inspection, the practitioners and children were discussing a possible visit to a local shop. Before the inspector's arrival, a staff member from the local primary school had attended to service to meet the staff and children and prepare for the upcoming transitions to primary school.

### Physical and material environment:

- A variety of materials and resources were available to the children in designated areas of interest to facilitate child-led play and learning. In the larger section of the room the children were provided with an art/mark making area, a selection of Montessori materials, a farm themed sensory tray, small world houses and figures and a shelf with resources to support self-regulation such as ear defenders, timers and squeeze toys. The smaller section of the room was designated for reading and relaxation and imaginary play. In this area there was a small sofa and large seating pad, selection of books, a well-resourced home corner, a workbench and a selection of tabletop activities and jigsaw puzzles.
- The materials and resources were stored on low level shelving. This ease of access to equipment supports children to engage in self-directed play and activity.
- The outdoor space provided a range of sensory experiences through the provision of a sand tray, digging areas with soil, flower beds and pots, a water wall and other natural materials. There was also ride on toys, balance boards and a bug hotel.

### 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

The registered provider had taken reasonable measures to ensure the health, safety and welfare of the children was maintained in the following ways.

#### General Safety:

- External and internal doors of the preschool service were appropriately secured to prevent an unauthorised person from gaining access to the children and prevent children from exiting the premises unsupervised.
- The premises, materials and equipment appeared to be in good and safe condition.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of the reach of children.

#### Infection Control:

- Cleaning and disinfection schedules and records were available and up to date. The services materials, equipment and facilities were in a clean and hygienic condition.

- Children were observed washing hands before eating their lunch or following messy play. Warm water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were available to children and staff to support effective handwashing.
- Children’s snacks, which were provided by parents, were stored appropriately in the fridge. Located in the care room.
- A ‘Pet policy’ was in place and last updated in September 2023. This policy was in place to support the safe and hygienic care and handling of the services pet chickens and enclosed coop located in the outdoor area. The policy adequately outlined the procedures in relation to the handling of pets, supervision, risk assessments, dealing with allergies and other responsibilities such as cleaning.

### Administration of Medication:

- No medication was administered on the day of inspection. However, there was documentary evidence available that demonstrated good practice in relation to previous incidents of medication administered to children on-site. The documentary evidence included written parental consent, details of medication, dosage and frequency and record of administration of medication by preschool staff.

### Fire Safety:

- The fire exit was unobstructed.

## 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) (1) A person who held in-date First Aid Response (FAR) training was, at all times, immediately available to the children attending the service. This was evidenced in the FAR training records maintained for 1 staff member.

(2)(a)&(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and stored in accessible and conspicuous locations 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 fire fighting 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 07/03/24.
- (b) There was a record available that detailed the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. Firefighting equipment was last checked and serviced by a registered professional on 16/04/24. The smoke alarm system was last checked and serviced by a registered professional on 29/02/24.
- (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.

### Part VI - Safety

#### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

#### Compliance Information

An insurance certificate was available to demonstrate the preschool service was adequately insured. The service is currently insured to accommodate 22 sessional preschool children, with an expiry date 27/03/2025.