

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015FL331		
Name of Service:	T/ A Tower View Montessori School		
Address of Service:	The Square, Lusk, Co. Dublin		
Eircode:	K45 FW63		
Name of Registered Provider:	Abigail Fox Carroll		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	28/02/2025		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM Not applicable
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	2 nd Floor, 4/5, The Nexus Building, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Ballycoolin, Dublin 15		
Inspection undertaken by:	Y. Kelly		
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

Tower View Montessori was established in 2014 as a privately owned early years service. The service provides sessional preschool care and education to children from 2 years 8 months until they commence attendance at primary school. The service operates from 9:00 am to 12:00 midday Monday to Friday and provides the option of children attending for an additional 30 minutes for an additional fee. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. Tower View Montessori is located in a single storey building in the centre of Lusk village in North Co Dublin. There is one care room in operation which is divided into 2 distinct spaces. The sanitary facilities are located directly off the care room and an enclosed outdoor area is located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The service employs four staff members including the registered provider who works directly with the children. On the day of the inspection the registered provider, deputy manager and two staff members employed in the service to reduce the adult to child ratio and if necessary to work with a child with additional needs, a post which is funded by the Minister as part of the Access and Inclusion Model, were present.

Methodology

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

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the ECCE room.

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,
- (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 to deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present and in charge of the service when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service at 09.20am and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c) The service had a clear management structure in place with clear roles and responsibilities outlined.

(2) The files for four staff members including the person in charge were reviewed, and the following was recorded:

(a) Eight validated and written references were available from past employers.

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

(d) International Police vetting was available for one adult who had lived outside of the state for a period of more than six months.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to confirm that four staff members whose files were reviewed and who may work directly with the children in 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 Minister.

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) On the day of the inspection there was an adequate number of staff members working directly with the children attending the service. There were 4 adults caring for 21 children on the morning of the inspection.

(3) The registered provider ensured that the correct adult to child ratios were maintained in the service.

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

- In the ECCE Room there were 21 children aged 3 years and 3 months to 4 years and 11 months being cared for by 4 adults including the registered provider, the deputy manager and 2 staff members employed as part of the Access and Inclusion Model.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a) Each child's learning, development and wellbeing was facilitated within the preschool in the following ways:

Basic needs:

- Children's snack and water bottles were brought from home into the service. Snack consisted of rolls and crackers with ham, cheese or cucumber, yoghurts and fruit including blueberries, strawberries, mandarins, bananas and grapes. The mealtime experience was observed to be a leisurely sociable occasion, where children sat together with their peers and the staff and chatted.
- There was a cosy area, the 'Reading Area' observed in the ECCE room for children to relax in as required. The cosy area was equipped with 2 sofas, a rug, blankets, cushions and a selection of books displayed at children's level for reading and relaxation.
- Children's independence was supported. Children were encouraged to put on coats on before going outside to play. Throughout the session, children were given responsibilities such as helping to wheel the trolley into the ECCE room to hand out snack.

Supporting relationships around children:

- Staff demonstrated warm and caring interactions with the children. There was a welcoming atmosphere in the service.
- Staff were observed interacting with children at their level and engaging in children's play with modelling dough, tabletop activities, reading stories with the children, during floor play and at outdoor play.
- Staff were observed to respond to and support children's ideas, for example one of the children wished to make a tent in the 'Reading Area' and the staff responded to this "that's a good idea" to which a group of children and adults proceeded to make a tent.
- Transitions were observed to be well managed; children were given five-minute verbal and visual cues to support them with the transitions. The children engaged well with tidying up, putting items away

independently whilst singing the tidy up song. Children signed in independently on a registration board with their photographs.

- Children’s identity and belonging were promoted in the service. For example, there was a ‘Family Wall’ and ‘Community Wall’ displayed at children’s level in the ECCE room. Children’s artwork and photographs of the children and their pets were displayed which supported children’s identity and belonging in the service.
- At collection time, parents were greeted at the door by staff. One staff member is assigned each day to greet children and parents at the door and to sign the children in.

Physical and Material Environment:

- The furniture provided in the care rooms was low level and appropriate to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms. Toys and equipment were visible and accessible to children on low level shelving which facilitated children’s independence in play.
- There were labels to denote interest areas and identify resources using photograph and word which promoted emergent literacy in the service.
- The room was divided into areas of interest which provided opportunities for a variety of spontaneous play experiences and choice for the children. Interest areas included a home corner with kitchen, dolls, cutlery, real life items and dress up clothes available, play doctors’ surgery with a doctor’s kit and x-ray print outs displayed to support imaginative and interactive play. There was a construction area with a large floor mat with wooden blocks, foam blocks, plastic building bricks, wooden train tracks, cars, photographs of iconic structures and natural materials to include pine cones and bamboo circles. In addition, there was a sand pit, messy play table with playdough, paint and chalk easel and mark making area with pencils, markers, glue sticks, scissors and rolling pins to support children’s creativity, mark making and sensory play. There were tabletop materials such as threading, pegboards and jigsaws to support fine motor development. Small world items included dolls houses, farm animals, wild animals and dinosaurs to support children’s imaginative and dramatic play. There was a range of Montessori materials which provided opportunities for early literacy and numeracy learning. In addition, there was a range of books available in the reading area which supported children’s language development.
- Children were observed playing in the outdoor play area. In the outdoor play area, there were interest areas to include a water play area with funnels, wooden kitchen with real life items, a boat and a workbench which provided opportunities for pretend and dramatic play. There were mats with small plastic blocks, buckets and spades and diggers for construction and a sandpit, chalk board and large chalk

for mark making and sensory play. There were ride in cars and ride on bicycles, tyres, and a slide which promoted gross motor and fundamental movement skills. Children’s wellies and waterproof gear for outdoor play is stored beside the doorway to the outdoor area.

Programme of Activities

- Observations of the children and children’s anecdotes were displayed in the ECCE room which inform curriculum planning based on children’s emergent interests. Children’s learning and development is documented in children’s learning journals. These include photographs of children engaged in learning experiences and children’s drawings. The registered provider discussed that children’s journals are sent home to share with parents each term and for them to share learning experiences from home.
- One of the themes of the month was ‘The Vet’. There was a display on the noticeboard which included photographs of children’s pets. Children pointed out these photographs and talked about their pets.

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:

- On arrival to the service, the inspector observed that the door was secure and monitored by staff. One staff member signs the children in each day.
- Cleaning agents were stored safely and not accessible to children.
- The outdoor play area was fully enclosed and secured and was mainly surfaced with artificial grass.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water, liquid hand soap and dispensed handtowels were available in the sanitary facilities.
- Children were observed to hand wash before eating, and this was encouraged and supported by staff.
- Pedal operated bins were available for disposal of waste and contaminated items.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was observed to be stored safely out of the reach of the children.
- There were health care plans available and displayed in the ECCE room for children who required them. Staff were aware of the care plans in place and the procedure to be followed in the event of a medical emergency.

Fire Safety:

- The fire drills were displayed on the wall. Monthly fire drill reports are kept.
- Fire exits were clearly labelled and unobstructed in the event of emergency evacuation.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. The water temperature in the wash hand basin in the ECCE room exceeded the recommended temperature of 43 °C. A temperature of 55.1 °C was recorded by the inspector at 11:05am. It is acknowledged that this wash hand basin is for adult use. The staff reported that children only use the wash hand basin in the sanitary accommodation which was observed by the inspector on the day of the inspection. However, this posed a potential scald risk to the children as the wash hand basin in the ECCE room was within reach of the children. It is acknowledged that the service took immediate action to rectify the non-compliance by reducing the water temperatures in the ECCE room when the inspector brought the identified risk to their attention. A temperature of 22.1 °C was recorded by the inspector at 11.25 am.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

Corrective Actions:

1. The registered provider reported that the thermostat of the sink water heater was immediately turned down to a lower temperature during the inspection and within 20 minutes it was at a correct temperature.

Preventive Actions:

1. The registered provider has placed a sign on the water heater in the cupboard to ensure that no staff member adjusts the temperature. All staff have been informed. The temperature is checked during the morning with a thermometer and a record of the check is kept.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photographic evidence of the staff sink temperature check record.

Photographic evidence of water heater temperature on thermometer submitted.

Photographic evidence of sign on the water heater in the cupboard submitted.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance under Regulation 23 has 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-
(b) is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of staff were trained in First Aid Response (FAR) and a staff member trained in FAR was available on the premises throughout the opening hours of the service. The registered provider held current First Aid Response (FAR) training. It is acknowledged that 3 staff members also held current paediatric first aid training.

(2)(b) An adequately stocked first aid box is available to the children attending the pre-school service 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.*
- (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) The registered provider ensured the following:
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills was available on the premises with the last drill dated as having been carried out on 26 February 2025.
 - (b) The number, type and maintenance record for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were available. Firefighting equipment and smoke alarms were last serviced in June 2024.
 - (4) Fire evacuation procedures were displayed in the service.