

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

Tusla I.D:	TU2015GY275
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Name of Service:	Top Marks Montessori
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Address of Service:	Father Sammon Centre, Monivea, Athenry, Co. Galway. H65 H393
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Email Address:	mcnultyhazel@gmail.com
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Name of Registered Provider:	Ms. Hazel McNulty
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Type of Proposed Service:	Sessional	✓	Part-Time		Drop-In	
	Full Day Care		Childminding		Temporary	

Proposed change:	Change in service address
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Proposed Number of Children:	22 (no change)
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Registered change:	Change in service address from Monivea National School, Monivea, Athenry, Co. Galway, H65 X993 to Father Sammon Centre, Monivea, County Galway, H65 H393
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Date of Inspection:	0 8 0 8 2 0 2 3
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Inspection undertaken by:	H. Heagney
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	Clinical & Administration Building, Block A - (1st Floor- Green Corridor), Merlin Park, Galway.
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Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

Note: For Office use only, to be completed by Registration Office

Registration Status:	Registered Sessional Service for 22 Children
Date of Registration	10 th August 2023

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Authority to Inspect

The Tusla Early Years Inspectorate carries out inspections of Early Years Services under Section 58(D) of the Child Care Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Description of Service	<p>Top Marks Montessori proposes to operate from a recently renovated room at the rear of Father Sammon Centre community hall, in the village of Monivea, Co. Galway. An Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme and sessional care programme is proposed to be offered from 9.30hrs to 12.30hrs, Monday to Friday. The pre-school proposes to cater for children aged between 2 years and 8 months to 6 years. The pre-school proposes to have a maximum number of 22 children attending the service at any one time. A child led play-based curriculum focusing on emerging interests with a Montessori focus is proposed to be provided.</p> <p>Top Marks Montessori is proposed to provide a school aged programme to cater for a maximum of 36 school aged children.</p>
Premises	<p>The pre-school proposes to consist of one playroom, located at the rear of the premises. There is a designated secure access entrance to the side of the community building, for the proposed children, parents, and guardians. The pre-school children will have access to a designated secure outdoor play area with direct access from playroom. Additionally, the pre-school children will have access under supervision to the adjacent hall in inclement weather.</p> <p>A school age programme is proposed to be provided between the one playroom and the adjacent hall.</p>
Staffing	<p>It is proposed that the registered provider will work in the premises daily. There is a proposed designated person in charge and a deputy designated person in charge. It is proposed that there will be three staff including the registered provider, that hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education.</p>
Methodology	<p>The inspection was an announced inspection to assess compliance with the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 and Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services)</p>

	<p>(Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under two themes: Governance, and Safety.</p> <p>The findings on inspection based on information obtained through examination of documentation, direct observation, and discussion with relevant staff are documented in the Inspection report and presented to the Registration Panel for consideration of a decision in relation to the service receiving continued registration. 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.</p>
Acknowledgements	The early years inspector wishes to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider 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.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement was met.</p> <p>(1)(a)</p> <p>There was a proposed designated person in charge and a proposed named person available to deputise in the service.</p>
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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.
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)—
 (c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement was met.</p> <p>(1)</p> <p>It is proposed that there will be an adequate number of staff working directly with the pre-school children.</p>
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	<p>It is proposed that there will be a maximum of 22 pre-school children at any one time.</p> <p>It is proposed that there will be three staff including the registered provider, who hold a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) at a minimum of a Level 5, in Early Childhood Care and Education.</p> <p>(8)(c)</p> <p>It is proposed that the registered provider will not operate the service single-handedly.</p>
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Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 - Facilities for Rest and Play

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that—
- (a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and
 - (b) there are adequate and suitable facilities for a pre-school child to rest during the day, and in the case of an overnight pre-school service, during the day and the night.
- (3) A registered provider of a full day care service, a part-time day care service or a childminding service, other than such a service to which paragraph (2) applies, shall ensure that—
- (a) a suitable, safe, and secure outdoor space to which the pre-school children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement was met.</p> <p>(1)(a)</p> <p>The design, organisation and resourcing of the newly renovated playroom environment would be able to support each child’s wellbeing, learning and development, within the ethos and philosophy of the service.</p> <p>The Top Marks Montessori playroom was designed and arranged to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> maintain a space that was clean, organised, and free of clutter, divided into areas that were supplied with materials organised in a way to support proposed children’s play, development, and learning, give all proposed children access to the same facilities, activities and play opportunities, to promote their welfare and development. <p>The equipment was stored on low-level shelving and would thereby be readily accessible to the proposed pre-school children.</p>
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The play equipment and materials were age and stage appropriate, they were designed to offer a child manipulative activity, to encourage hand eye co-ordination, to develop fine motor skills and logical thinking.

Materials and items of interest in the Top Mark Montessori room, included a construction table with tools, including gears, screws, and drills. There were building and stacking materials. There were doctors' sets, animals, little ponies, dinosaurs, farms, an arc, dress up clothing, bags, hair heads, and hair dressing accessories. There were games, insets, puzzles, links, connectors, reels, and threading materials. There were art and craft materials including paints, paper, bibs, art trays, stencils, and play dough cutters and shapes. There were books, foam mats and disc mats. There were dolls, baby bottles, dolls clothing and prams. There was a house with small world items. There were latch / lock boards, and lace, tie, zip, snap, and button fabric life skill sets. There were musical instruments, pins, pegs, towers, shapes sorters, mix / match items, trays, containers, and bowls. There was a shop with a shop register, baskets, and a post office box. There were magnets, blocks, bricks, action figures and little people. There were transport vehicles including cars, diggers, tractors, trucks, and tracks. There was also a selection of transport vehicles in a large basket. There was a kitchen home area with food items, a toaster, mixer, and weighting scales.

(1)(b)

A rest / quiet area was provided in the Top Mark Montessori room in the form of a child size couch, disc, and foam mats to facilitate a proposed child to rest or opt out of an activity if he or she chose to.

(3)(a)

Outdoor area

The registered provider advised that the outdoor areas would be an extension of the indoor environment and linked with the learning that goes on inside. The playroom had direct access to the outdoor play area via a single and double door. The registered provider advised that the children would have the opportunity to be outside as often as possible, in all weather conditions. Equipment and materials observed in the outdoor

play areas would support children’s play, movement and exploration and provide opportunities exclusive to the outdoors. The outdoor area to the rear of the premises was surrounded by high metal fencing, walls, and gates. The designated area was covered with bark with a wide disability access concrete pathway / railing. There was a wooden climbing frame with a vantage point, steps, a slide, and an easel. There was a wooden teepee with a wooden base. There was a theatre / shop. There was a climbing bridge. There was a wooden and plastic kitchen. There was a sand / water basin. There was a rocker, and a storage box with footballs / toys. There was a large planting / soil area for children to dig. There was a double-sided easel and various planters with plants. Behind the outdoor play area was a designated car park area for staff.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

General Safety

- There was a designated secure entrance pathway at the side of Father Sammon Centre and a designated secure entrance door at the rear of the community centre with direct access into the playroom.
- The internal doors were appropriately secured to prevent children accessing unsafe areas.
- The staff only areas, staff toilets, the hall / kitchenette, storage / utility presses and staff locker (for their personal belongings) were secure and thereby inaccessible to a pre-school child.
- The external play area was secure so that children could not leave the area unsupervised and unauthorised persons could not enter the area.
- Fire doors throughout the building were unobstructed.
- All cleaning agents were stored inaccessible to the children.

- A system was in place to ensure that daily records of attendance would be kept for the children that will be attending the pre-school.
- Leads, cables, and flexes were wall mounted and secured to prevent any trips or strangulation hazard.
- The electric radiator heating system was thermostatically controlled, to ensure the playroom temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- Thermostatically controlled warm water not exceeding 43°C to facilitate hygienic hand washing without risk of scalding the children was and would be available to facilitate hygienic hand washing. On the day of inspection, the water temperature reading was 39°C.
- Heavy equipment and furnishings were anchored appropriately.
- The one low openable window in the playroom was fitted with restrictive access devices / safety system. The other openable windows were high and thereby inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- There was frosting on the single and double glass doors as a safety precaution.
- Blind cords were appropriately fitted with secure fasteners and thereby inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- All toys and play equipment were observed to be safe and in good condition.
- There was a documented risk assessment system for the indoor and outdoor play areas.
- The service had a safety statement and a risk assessment system for checking that toys and equipment were not broken, in a clean condition and maintained in a good state of repair.
- There was a pest control policy / template record system.
- The registered provider clearly identified to the early years' inspector, the drop off and collection procedures for children.
- There were no pits or ponds in the outdoor area to cause any risk of danger to the proposed pre-school children.

Infection Control

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hand washing facilities were provided with a supply of warm water, liquid hand soap and disposable paper hand towels. • The toys and play equipment were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition. • The registered provider advised that the outdoor play equipment would be cleaned prior to/ after a child’s use, with documented records maintained. • A refrigerator was provided in the playroom for the storage of perishable foods. • The playroom was observed to be kept adequately ventilated with the windows and doors left open whilst maintaining the room temperatures at the required levels. • There was evidence of a general cleaning programme, a cleaning schedule, and a cleaning policy. The registered provider advised that the proposed staff would be complying with the national guidance on the management of infectious diseases for children in a childcare setting.
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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 is available to the children attending the pre-school service at all times.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) Two staff who will be working in the pre-school service have a current paediatric first aid qualification. A third staff member is booked for first aid training.
- (2)(a) Suitably equipped first aid box was stored in the playroom and in an easily accessible conspicuous position.
- (b) The first aid box was readily available, with content items within date.

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.

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(4) *A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire shall be displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.*

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>(1)(a) Arrangements were in place to record monthly fire drills.</p> <p>(b) A record of the number, type, and maintenance record of firefighting equipment in the service was on file.</p> <p>Records indicated that the last annual maintenance for the firefighting equipment was dated 17th of July 2023.</p> <p>Records indicated that the last annual maintenance certificate for the smoke and fire detection system was dated 4th of July 2023.</p> <p>(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed at the entrance to the playroom.</p>
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Part VI – Safety

Regulation 28 – Insurance

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

Requirement met:	<p>The requirement has been met.</p> <p>The service’s insurance with an expiry date 27th of March 2024, was for a sessional service for 22 pre-school children and an afterschool service for 36 school aged children and included the following: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • public liability insurance, • insurance against fire and theft, • buildings insurance, • insurance for outings undertaken as part of the service provision.
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Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 – Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are—

- (a) *of sound and stable structure,*
- (b) *safe and secure,*
- (c) *kept adequately lit, heated, and ventilated,*
- (d) *cleaned, maintained, and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) *equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Requirement met:	The requirement has been met.
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- (a) From a visual inspection the premises was of sound and stable structure.
- (b) The indoor and outdoor play areas were safe and secure.
- (c) There was natural lighting in the proposed playroom with windows / doors on the outer walls.
- The proposed playroom was well ventilated by means of the openable windows and doors.
- The artificial lighting provided was shatter proof.
- The electric radiators had a thermostatically controlled thermostat to allow the recommended room temperature of between 18°C and 22°C.
- On the day of inspection, the proposed playroom temperature was maintained between 18°C to 22°C.
- The warm water in the sanitary areas was maintained at a safe temperature of 36.5°C and the registered provider advised it would be no greater than 43°C.
- (d) In the proposed playroom, play, and work equipment was clean and in good repair.
- Cleaning equipment was safely stored away from the proposed playroom in a designated secured storage utility press, in secure cupboards and on high shelves.
- From observation, the new renovated furnished playroom was maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.
- (e) Adequate and suitable sanitary facilities were provided.
- The proposed playroom had two designated children’s toilets with two designated children’s wash hand basins.
- There was a nappy changing table and an airtight sealable bin for the storage of nappies, in a designated sanitary area, adjacent to the community hall.
- There were three designated adult toilets with designated wash hand basins adjacent to the community hall.
- Liquid soap dispensers and paper hand towels in designated dispensers were within easy access to a pre-school child in the two children’s sanitary areas.
- Foot pedal lidded bins were provided in the sanitary area and playroom.

Part VII – Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 30 – Minimum Space Requirements

- (1) Subject to paragraphs (2) to (6), a registered provider shall ensure that adequate clear floor space is available in the premises for the work, play and movement of children attending the pre-school service.
- (2) A registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 opposite a particular reference number specified in column (1) of that Schedule in respect of the age range of children specified in column (2) thereof at that reference number is available for each child in that age range attending the service.
- (3) A registered provider of a sessional pre-school service or a pre-school service in a drop-in centre shall ensure that a minimum of 1.818 square metres of clear floor space is available for each child attending the service.
- (4) Where a registered provider contemporaneously provides—
 - (a) a sessional pre-school service, and
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum clear floor space applicable for the duration of the sessional preschool service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the floor space specified in paragraph (3).

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) Adequate floor space was provided in the proposed new playroom for the free movement of children to work and play.
- (3) The proposed registered provider will ensure that the minimum clear floor space will be adhered to for pre-school children.
- (4) The floor space measurement of the proposed new playroom was 45.96 square meters thus, ensuring a minimum of 1.81 square metres of clear floor space will be available for each child proposing to attend the sessional service.

These measurements indicate that the playroom can accommodate a maximum of 25 pre-school children on a sessional basis.

However, a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are no more than 22 pre-school children in a playroom, in the service, at any one time.