

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KE074		
Name of Service:	Caragh Court Montessori School		
Address of Service:	7 Caragh Court, Naas, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W91 NR59		
Name of Registered Provider:	Anne Marie Egan		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	20/06/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Child & Family Agency Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare W91X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher		
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
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Description of service

Caragh Court Montessori School is a private sessional service which provides care and education to preschool children aged between two and six years old. The service is open Monday to Friday from 09.30am - 12.30pm for 38 weeks of the pre-school year.

The service is located in a purpose-built premises to the rear of the registered provider's private home in a private residential housing estate in Naas. One large pre-school room and a play area with an area of shelter are provided to the front of the pre-school.

Staffing

There were two staff members, including the registered provider and one student on work placement, present and working directly with the children on the day of inspection.

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.

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)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

(b) The named person in charge remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

The records of two staff members and one student were reviewed.

(2)(a)(b)

Six written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source in the absence of a past employer reference, were available in respect of two staff members and one student whose records were reviewed.

(c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for two staff members and one student whose records were reviewed.

(d) International police vetting was not applicable as no staff member recently employed had resided outside the state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)

Two staff members, including the registered provider and working directly with children attending the service held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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 were 14 children attending the service being supervised directly by two staff members and one student on work placement.

(3)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The pre-school was well resourced with a wide variety of age-appropriate play and learning equipment and materials that provided a stimulating and curious learning environment for the children, both indoors and in the outdoor covered play space. All equipment and materials were accessible to the children and grouped to encourage children to use them independently. The tables and chairs provided were child sized which enabled all children to sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. All equipment and furniture were observed in a clean and well-maintained condition.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

The service had a healthy eating policy in place and the registered provided the morning snack for the children each day. The snack served included a variety of fresh fruit pieces and rice cakes with water to drink.

Fresh drinking water was readily available in the pre-school throughout the morning.

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 main entrance gate to the service was secured and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. All toys and equipment observed were in good condition and working order. Cleaning agents and equipment was stored out of reach of the children.

It was observed that grapes, when served to the children for snack, were cut in half to mitigate the risk of a child potentially choking.

Infection Control:

The premises were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and cleaning schedules were completed daily. Children's hands were washed before eating, following toilet use, outdoor and messy play. There was a supply of thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towel to support hygienic hand washing and drying. Foot pedal operated bins were available for the safe disposal of used paper hand towel and tissues.

Hand sanitiser was also available and staff members the children's use of same.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and staff members advised they were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

Fire Safety:

Fire drills were carried out and records maintained. Fire exits were easily identifiable and unobstructed.

Outing:

A yearly outing takes place to the local sports hall for the children's graduation ceremony. The registered provider advised the outings policy for the service is followed to guide practice.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.
- (2) Where there are more than 15 children attending a pre-school service in a drop-in centre, the registered provider shall ensure that one employee or unpaid worker is assigned responsibility for the checking in and out of children.
- (3) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) no person other than-
 - (i) pre-school child attending the service,
 - (ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,
 - (iii) an employee, or
 - (iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and
 - (b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.
- (4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

- (1)
The registered provider ensured that each child was checked in and out of the service. This was confirmed by the written attendance records maintained in the pre-school.
- (2)
Not applicable as this was not a drop-in service.
- (3) (a),(b)
The deputy person in charge ensured that any person entering the service was approved and a record in writing was maintained.

(4)

The registered provider confirmed that records were retained in storage for the required period.

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)

Persons trained in first aid response (FAR) were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)(b)

The first aid equipment was safely stored and in a conspicuous position in the pre-school room and was at all times available to the children attending the pre-school service.

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)

A record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises.

(b)

There were records available detailing the maintenance of the firefighting equipment in the service dated 8 December 2022.

(4)

Notices were displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

There was not an up-to-date record available detailing the maintenance of the smoke/fire detection system in the service.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) (b) Inspection carried out and certified. Date agreed for future annual inspections.

Supporting documentation submitted

Maintenance record for the smoke alarm.

Summary Comment

The written response and documentary evidence submitted by the registered provider has been assessed by the Early Years Inspectorate. Regulatory compliance is met for regulation 26.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children in the service were observed being supervised at all times throughout the inspection including, indoors and outdoors, during snack time and as necessary for hand washing and toilet use.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover valid until 27 March 2024. The insurance provided cover for 22 children.