

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KK017				
Name of Service:	Cloghoge Montessori School				
Address of Service:	Ballycallan Hall, Balleven, Ballycallan, Co. Kilkenny				
Eircode:	R95 VF25				
Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Everard				
Service type:	Sessional				
Date of Inspection:	14/11/2024				
No of pre-school children:	<table border="1"> <tr> <td>AM</td> <td>21</td> <td>PM</td> <td>N/A</td> </tr> </table>	AM	21	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	<p>Early Years Inspectorate Tusla Child & Family Agency Athy Road Carlow</p>				
Inspection undertaken by:	Norma Thornton				
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

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Description of service

Cloghoge Montessori School is a registered early childhood care and education (ECCE) childcare service which operates from the Ballycallan community hall in rural west Kilkenny. The service operates from 09:00 to 12:00 hours Monday to Friday and caters for children aged two to six years of age. The service operates from the main hall and has designated children and staff toilets adjacent to the classroom. There is a secure outdoor play area, located to the side of the hall.

Staffing

Currently there are two staff members, including the registered provider. employed to work directly with the children attending the ECCE session. It is acknowledged that a recruitment campaign is in process to employ additional relief staff.

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/ premises and facilities. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on assessment of compliance under regulations 9, 10, 11, 15, 19, 23, 24, 25, 26 and 28.

A sampling process was used under regulations 10, 15, 19, 24. The scope of the inspection included the outdoor area, and the classroom in the building.

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 member 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 who was able to deputise.

(b) At all times during the inspection, both the registered provider and deputy designated person in charge were present on the premises.

(2) The staff files for the two staff members employed in the service were reviewed by the inspector.

(a)(b) Two validated references were on file for each of the staff members, from either a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda Vetting certificates were on file for each of the staff members working directly with the children.

(d) Not applicable as no staff member had lived outside of the State for longer than six months.

(4) The inspector observed that there was a certificate of qualification in early childhood care and education in each staff member's file, demonstrating that each staff member held a qualification ranging from Level 5 to Level 6 on the National Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) framework.

Part III – Management and Staff

Regulation 10 - Policies, procedures etc. of pre-school service

A registered provider of a pre-school service shall ensure that the written policies, procedures and statements specified in Schedule 5 are in place for the service.

Compliance Information

On review of documentation the inspector observed that the written policies, procedures and statements required under schedule 5 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016 were available in the service and open for inspection. The service policies were specific to the service and their contents adequate.

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) The registered provider always ensured that there was an adequate number of staff members directly caring for the children in attendance at the service.

(3) There were 2 qualified staff members, including the registered provider, directly caring for 21 preschool children.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)(a) to (i) On review of a sample of 12 records of pre-school children, the inspector observed that records of the particulars (a) to (i) were maintained for each preschool child.

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) Throughout the session the inspector observed that the registered provider and staff member in the service, ensured that each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated during the session. The classroom provided a variety of areas of interest to encourage and stimulate children's play and imagination. The areas of interest included a kitchen/ home area, construction area, dolls area, shop area, reading and rest area and a farm area. Low level shelving on castor wheels allowed areas to be defined by moving the shelving into place. The low-level shelving offered visually labelled storage boxes of play materials and resources.

The inspector observed the children participating in circle time, each taking a turn to speak and chat about their family news, reflecting upon their group rules, singing songs, learning counting and days of the week and listening to one of their favourite books.

After circle time, the children and staff members did some stretching yoga before taking part in some playdough activities which they enjoyed shaping and stretching and creating imaginary pieces.

The children enthusiastically showed their learning journals to the inspector, explaining how the journal documented all the activities and events that occurred while they attended Montessori school. The children also informed the inspector that they were preparing for a class Christmas play – The Sleepy Shepherd, in which each child had a line to recite. Parents and families were invited to attend and after which they had planned a Christmas party together.

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 service entrance door was secured with a call bell system, which the staff responded to and checked who the visitor was through the peep hole in the door, before authorising entry to the service. The outdoor play area was secured with a five-foot high wooden and mesh fence on one side and a green plastic covered metal fence on the other side.

Cleaning equipment and solutions were observed to be securely kept in a secure storage area, inaccessible to the children.

Infection Control:

Staff and children were observed to adhere to the service's infection control policy with handwashing observed after toileting, messy play and prior to snack time.

Cleaning schedules demonstrated that staff carried out regular cleaning and maintenance of the physical environment and play equipment.

Administration of Medication:

The registered provider informed the inspector that medications were not generally required to be administered in the service, however there was an adequate administration of medication policy in place, if a child required administration of an anti-febrile medication or in the instance where a child in attendance at the service required child centred medication plan, for the administration of a specific medication.

Outing:

The service had an adequate outings policy in place, to implement, when taking children on an outing away from the service. The policy detailed the preparation, risk assessment and communication with parents/guardians prior to the outing, the precautions, and procedures to be taken prior to and during the outing and the procedures to be carried out in the event of an emergency.

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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1) On review of attendance records the inspector was assured that the registered provider and staff recorded the checking in and out of each child attending the service daily, detailing each child's time of entry and exit daily.

(3)(a) The staff and registered provider assured the inspector that no other person apart from children attending the service, parents/guardians dropping or collecting children, staff members could enter the premises without being approved by a staff member.

(b) The inspector observed that a daily record was maintained of any authorised visitors permitted entry to the service. The inspector was requested to record their entry to the service, which included the date, name, contact number, reason for entry, who approved the access and time of entry and departure.

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) On review of staff files the inspector observed that both the registered provider and staff member employed in the service held current certificates in first aid responder (FAR) training. These two staff members were rostered to be present daily with the children in attendance in the service.

(2)(a)(b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available stored on a table in the classroom and was always available to the children in attendance in the 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 fire fighting equipment and smoke alarms in the premises.

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

(a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,

(b) an employee, and

(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) On review of fire drill records maintained, the inspector observed that fire drills were carried out monthly in the service. The last fire drill was recorded as having taken place on the 04 October 2024.

(b) Records were available demonstrating that the last maintenance record for the firefighting equipment was recorded as having taken place on the 02 May 2024 and for the smoke alarm system as having taken place on the 31 December 2023.

(4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in the entrance hall.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

On review of the service's current insurance certificate, the inspector observed that the insurance certificate detailed cover for a sessional childcare service for 22 children which was active until the 27 March 2025.