

TUSLA PRE- REGISTRATION REGULATORY INSPECTION REPORT

Inspection Due to a Proposed Change of Circumstances

Tusla I.D:	TU2015KY083							
Name of Service	Mounthawk Montessori School & Busy Bees Nursery							
Address of Service:	Clongherbrien, Tralee, Kerry. V92 Y424.							
Email Address:	mounthawkmontessorischool@live.ie							
Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Quirke Crowley							
Type of Proposed Service:	Full Day Care	✓	Part-Time	✓	Sessional	✓		
	Drop-In		Childminding		Temporary			
Proposed change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in numbers of children attending full day care. • Outdoor Sessional Service (Casa Dei Bambini), 2 years 8 months to 6 years, 09.00 – 12:00 and 12.15 - 15.15 • Change of age profile from 0 – 6 years to 2 – 6 years 							
Proposed Number of Children:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full Day Care: Increase in numbers from 50 to 84 children across existing rooms and two repurposed rooms. • Outdoor Sessional Service (Casa Dei Bambini) – 22 pre-school children in the morning and afternoon sessions. 							
Recommended Change Following Inspection:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of children at any one time 108 of which 68 will be full day care. Including: • Outdoor Sessional Service (Casa Dei Bambini) – 22 Sessional Children in the morning from 09.00 – 12:00 and in the afternoon from 12.15 - 15.15 • Change of age profile from children aged from 0 -6 years to 2 years to 6 years. 							
Registered change:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Change in number of children that can be accommodated from 50 to 108 (Max 68 Full Day Care) • Addition of an outdoor sessional service • Change of age profile from 0 – 6 years to 2 – 6 years 							
Date of Inspection:	0	2	0	6	2	0	2	3

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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel, M. Gibbons
Title:	Early Years Inspectors
Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Address:	134 Bank Place,
	Mallow,
	Cork. P51 EC59

Rationale for Inspection:
Proposed Change of Circumstance

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

Registration Status:	Registered Full Day Care / Part Time / Sessional Service for 108 Children (Max 68 Full Day Care)
Date of Registration	14 th June 2023

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	Mounthawk Montessori and Busy Bees Nursery is a private early years care and education service in operation since 1999 currently offering a choice of full-time, part-time and sessional services. The service caters for children aged from 0 – 6 years of age, Monday to Friday from 07:30 am until 18:30 pm for 51 weeks of the year. The services facilitates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme and a school age service is available from 13:30 pm until 18:15 pm.
Premises	Mounthawk Montessori and Busy Bees Nursery is located in the urban area of Tralee, County Kerry. The service currently operates from a purpose-built, single storey childcare facility which is currently registered to operate four care rooms namely Imagination, Garden Studio, Orchard, and Busy Bees (The Imagination and Orchard care rooms have been combined to form the Orchard care room). The service proposes to operate an outdoor sessional service (Casa Dei Bambini) in the morning from 9.00 am until 12 noon and in the afternoon from 12.15 pm to 3.15 pm. The proposed outdoor sessional service, Casa Dei Bambini, will be accommodated in a semi-enclosed wooden structure located in

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	the newly designed outdoor area, positioned at the rear of the service. In addition, the service is proposing to increase their full day care numbers in the existing rooms and in two small, repurposed rooms.
Staffing	There are twenty staff employed in the service including the registered provider, two AIM Support Workers and a school age care employee.
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) (Amendment) Regulations 2016. The Inspection focused on regulations under the following themes; Governance, Health, Welfare and Development of the child, Safety and Premises.</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 taken into consideration when making a decision in relation to registering the change in circumstance. 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 Inspectors wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered provider and both managers who were present on the day of inspection.

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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:

This requirement has been met.

(1)

(a) The registered provider ensured that the service had a designated person in charge and a named person available to deputise. Details of all staff members and their roles were displayed on a wall in the reception area.

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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

(1) The registered provider proposes that there will be 19 staff working with a total maximum number of 108 pre-school children at any one time, 68 of whom will be full day care.

Room/ age range	Adults	Children Sessional	Children Full Day care
Butterflies (2 years – 2 years 6 months)	1	5	5
Garden Studio (2 years 6 months - 4 years)	2	9	7
Orchard (2 years 6 months – 4 years)	4	37	29
Art (2 years 6 months - 4 years)	1	5	4
Busy Bees (4 years – 6 Years)	3	30	23
Casa Dei Bambini (2 years 8 months – 6 years)	2	22	
Total		108	68

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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:

This requirement has been met.

(1)

Indoors

(a) There were adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play both indoors in the care rooms and in the seamless outdoor provision. Each care room was equipped with clearly defined learning zones which promoted opportunities to enhance the learning needs of the children across all developmental areas. Cognitive development was enhanced with resources that encouraged mathematical concepts, language, culture and community which reflected the children's lived experiences with areas and resources reflecting the jobs of their parent's/guardians in the community. Multi- sensory development was optimised with the use of light boxes, coloured lights, aromatic and edible plants, sand, water and clay encouraging the children to engage in meaningful play experiences and open-ended discovery. Language development was promoted in a number of areas and children will have the opportunity to discuss different types of feelings which are explored in a range of books available in each care room. All of the materials and resources were located at the children's level which made them easily accessible, offering choice and independence.

The seamless covered outdoor facilities offered opportunities for imaginary play with wooden home corners, playhouses, a pirate puppet show and a Wigwam. Wall mounted chalk boards were available for mark making and art and crafts materials,

paints, coloured pencils along with easels and paper were readily available for creative development. Children’s picnic tables with umbrellas and cushioned seating, together with adult seats, were located in the different areas. Each area had a fridge to store snacks. Gross motor skills were promoted with a range of developmentally appropriate equipment including bikes, trikes, a climbing frame, rockers and footballs. Materials and resources were available which promoted fine skills including threading and punching. Small wooden bridges facilitate the children moving from one area to the next.

Outdoor Sessional Area

The semi-enclosed outdoor structure in the outdoor area was divided into zoned learning areas similar to the indoor care rooms. There were a large number of natural materials such as cones, pebbles, conkers, leaves, flowers and shells for investigation with magnifying glasses and mirrors. Imaginary play and role play were facilitated with a range of equipment including a wooden kitchen, wooden snack cart and an x-ray machine, hospital trolley and castle. Easily accessible resources included word puzzles, animals, cars, practical life materials, tools, blocks and shapes. A large polytunnel was located in the outdoor area and was accessible from both ends. It offered a variety of resources for the children to engage in planting and growing while caring for the natural environment including their strawberry, blackcurrants, mint and lemon balm plants which the children planted.

A water wall offered opportunities for gross and fine motor skills from carrying and pouring while allowing for exploration and discovery. A music wall with life size and child size musical instruments encouraged creativity providing the children with resources to express themselves. Tree stumps with wood chippings underfoot provided an additional area for story time, where the children could relax. A child sized garden shed was available and a wigwam providing alternative areas where the children could play individually or in a group.

(b)

Indoor rest area

There are adequate rest facilities in each of the care rooms and in the seamless outdoor provision where the children can rest and relax. These areas include soft furnishings in the form of child sized sofas and seats. Blinds are available to control the amount of light entering the care rooms. Stackable beds and waterproof mats, which are easily cleaned, are available with individual bed linen.

Outdoor sessional rest area

The outdoor area has facilities available in the semi-structured area which can facilitate rest consisting of soft mats for sitting with a floor mat underneath. Fabricated leaves above the area provide additional shade. The lights can be switched off to provide a suitable environment for rest/sleep. Stackable beds and waterproof sleep mats which are easily cleaned, with individual bed linen are available. Air coolers are available to ensure the air temperatures do not exceed 20°C and heaters are available to maintain correct temperatures within the area (16 °C-20°C). Provision for indoor sleep will be offered to ensure the children are not cold or uncomfortable with the sleep policy stating that if the temperatures fall between 4 - 8 °C children will be offered rest facilities indoors. Adults responsible for recording the physical sleep checks every 10 minutes will also record the air temperatures to ensure sleeping children are not cold.

(3)

(a) The children in all of the care rooms and the outdoor sessional service have access to suitable, safe and secure outdoor play areas. The seamless outdoor provision, semi-structured outdoor area and the polytunnel all provide areas where the children can find shade or shelter. The perimeter of the outdoor area is secured with concrete walls which have wooden panelling on top of them, increasing the height of the wall. There are two high wooden gates in the outdoor area with sliding bolts located at the top of each gate, out of reach of the children ensuring children are safe in the enclosed outdoor area.

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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.

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

The service promotes healthy eating, and the parents have access to a three week menu plan, provided by the service for suggestions on healthy meal and snack options. The registered provider stated that hot food and snacks, provided by the parent's/guardians, are served at regular intervals. It is proposed that the parents/guardians will send in the mid-morning snack for the outdoor sessional children. The service provides a breakfast between 7.00 and 9.15 am, consisting of various cereals including porridge and cornflakes. Mid-morning snack is served at 10.15 with children recorded as having eaten a selection of filled wraps, cheese, yogurt, and fruit. A hot lunch is offered between 12.15 pm and 12.30 pm, records indicated that examples of meals consumed included chicken curry, mashed potatoes and gravy and chicken stir fry. At the afternoon snack time of 3.00 pm children were noted to have had ham sandwiches, cheese, bread sticks and a selection of fruits. There is a 4.15 pm snack and the registered provider stated that children have brown bread and cheese, there is an additional snack or meal served at 5.15 pm for a small number of remaining children. Each area including the proposed outdoor sessional has a supply of age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery. Water stations are available in all areas, if the children are thirsty. There is a kitchen with four microwaves available for the reheating of food. Records of food, which was served to the children, were available. Each of the care rooms had a fridge located in the seamless outdoor areas of their care rooms and the outdoor sessional service had a fridge in the polytunnel to prevent food from spoiling. The healthy eating policy was viewed prior to the inspection and it contained all of the necessary particulars.

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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:

This requirement was met.

- The main entrance door was secured upon arrival. Entrance to the service and the outdoor sessional service was gained by pressing a bell located at the main entrance which was answered by the staff preventing the entry of unauthorised adults. Exiting the building was gained by pressing a button which was located high up on the door frame, out of the reach of children, preventing children leaving the service unsupervised.
- All emergency exits were unobstructed.
- Visibility circles were fitted to low-level glass doors to prevent children bumping into them.
- The windows in the care rooms were fitted with window restrictors preventing children from exiting or falling. The windows in the outdoor sessional service are inaccessible to the children.
- All toys and equipment were noted to be safe in all of the care rooms and in the outdoor sessional service.
- Heavy equipment was secured to the walls in both the indoor and outdoor areas preventing tipping or falling.
- All electric cables and flexes were inaccessible to children in the care rooms and the proposed children in the outdoor sessional service.
- Two bottles of anti-febrile medication, which were in their original containers, clearly labelled and in date were stored in the kitchen in a high cupboard, inaccessible by the children.
- All cleaning agents stored in the indoor and outdoor areas were stored on high shelves out of reach of the children.
- Outdoor waste bins are inaccessible to the children.
- Staff belongings are stored in lockers, out of reach of the children.

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- The kitchen door was closed and inaccessible to the children.
- The CCTV security monitor was located up high on the wall in the Orchard care room and the flexes were secured, out of reach of the children.
- In all sinks used by staff and children throughout the service thermostatically controlled hot water was available in all of the wash hand basins of the indoor sanitary areas of the care rooms ranging from 39°C to 41°C.
- There was dispensing soap, blue roll and pedal operated bins for the disposal of the paper roll and tissues in each of the sanitary areas indoors and outdoors.
- In the event of red weather warning, extremely dangerous and destructive weather, the service would close.
- Parents/guardians are provided with a list of suitable clothing and footwear for each season to ensure the children are comfortable and that their clothing and footwear protects them from the elements. In the event the children have forgotten their spare clothes the service has spare clothing and footwear available. A separate covered area is available where the children can store their belongings and change their clothing and footwear.

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.

Requirement met:

The requirement has been met.

- (1) Valid certificates were available to evidence that at least three adults were available, at all times, who had completed First Aid Responder (FAR) training. The expiry dates of all three certificates was recorded as 22 October 2024. One of adults is a proposed staff member of the proposed outdoor sessional service.

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- (2)
- (a) (b) There were nine well stocked first aid boxes/bags available in the service including the first aid boxes of the proposed outdoor sessional service and the Art and Butterfly care rooms. All of the boxes/bags were stored on shelving located in high areas, easily accessible to the adults and were available 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.*

Requirement met:

This requirement has been met.

- (1)
- (a) Written records were available of the fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last drill was recorded as taking place on 1 June 2023. Templates are available for the recording of fire drills for the proposed outdoor sessional service.
- (b) Written records were available of the number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms in the indoor premises and the proposed outdoor sessional service. The indoor firefighting equipment and smoke alarm certificates were dated 6 September 2022. The outdoor sessional service firefighting equipment and smoke alarm certificates were dated 29 May 2023.
- (4) Notices of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on all of the care room walls beside the fire doors and beside the firefighting equipment in the proposed outdoor sessional service area. There were two fire assembly points in the proposed outdoor sessional area located at both exit gates and one in the front of the service in the car park area.

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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:

The registered provider ensured the pre-school service was adequately insured. A certificate with an expiry date of 27 April 2024 was available for inspection. The service is insured for 108 children at any one time. The particulars of the insurance included public liability, fire and theft and outings.

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:

- (a) The registered provider stated that both the indoor structure and proposed outdoor semi-enclosed structure were sound and stable. The outdoor semi-enclosed structure is enclosed on three sides with a wide opening on the fourth side. It has 2 windows panes which can be removed, if necessary, on one side. It has a Perspex roof and natural shading is available from a nearby tree. There are a number of different ground surfaces including artificial grass, natural limestone paving, bark and mulch.
- (b) The perimeter of the outdoor area was secured by a concrete wall which had wooden panelling added to increase the height at the top of the wall. In addition, there were two high gates with sliding bolts on the inside ensuring that no unauthorised adult could gain entry from outside the service.
- (c) Both the Art and Butterfly care rooms had two light fittings with safety covers and one openable window for natural ventilation. The room temperatures

were recorded as 22°C and the air conditioning was on. The sanitary areas of both rooms had openable windows and one ceiling light in each area with safety covers.

The proposed outdoor structure (Casa Dei Bambini) had two outdoor ceiling lights with safety covers providing artificial light and these were supplemented with two large windowpanes which provided natural light. There was a wall heater providing heat and natural ventilation was available from the wide entrance area. The sanitary and changing areas of the proposed outdoor sessional service were naturally and mechanically ventilated. A wall heater was located high above the changing area, if required. Lighting was both natural and artificial with each toilet and the sanitary area fitted with a covered light.

(d) Both the indoor care rooms and the proposed outdoor sessional service were newly painted, clean and well maintained. Cleaning schedules were available, maintained and up to date for all care rooms including the Art and Butterfly care rooms. The rooms are mopped daily, and the mop heads are washed each evening at the highest temperatures. Cleaning schedule templates were available for the proposed outdoor sessional service.

(e) The Butterfly room has access to one toilet, two wash hand basins and one changing unit and the Art room has one toilet and one wash hand basin. In total there are ten children's toilets including the two children's toilets for the outdoor sessional service, two adult toilets and three nappy changing units. Therefore, there are sufficient toilets, changing units and wash hand basins for the proposed 108 sessional children and 68 full day care children.

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:

- (1) It is proposed in the application submitted by the registered provider that the service would accommodate 84 pre-school children attending on a full day care basis. However, when taking into consideration the various age groups and clear floor space required for the work, play and movement of each child there was insufficient space. When measured the five care rooms and Casa Dei Bambini, in the outdoor sessional service, had a combined floor space of 204.34 m² allowing for 68 full day care children, rising to 108 children during sessional times between the five rooms and proposed outdoor sessional services.
- (2) Based on the revised numbers of 68 full day care children, the minimum amount of clear floor space specified in column (3) of Schedule 7 in respect of the age range of children proposing to attend the full day care service is adequate.

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Room Name	Age Range	Floor Space	FDC	S
Butterflies	2 years – 2 years 6 months	12.47 m ²	5	5
Garden Studio	2 years 6 months – 4 years	17.8 m ²	7	9
Orchard	2 years 6 months – 6 years	68.31 m ²	29	37
Busy Bees	4 years – 6 years	54.6 m ²	23	30
Art	2 years 8 months – 6 years	10.2 m ²	4	5
Casa Dei Bambini	2 years 8 months – 6 years	40.96 m ²		22
	Total	204.34 m²	68	108

(3) Casa Dei Bambini, the proposed outdoor sessional service, has sufficient floor space of 40.96 m² to accommodate 22 sessional children. Each sessional child requires 1.81 m² as specified in paragraph 3. These sessions will operate in the morning from 9.00 am until 12.00 noon, and in the afternoon from 12.15 pm until 3.15 pm.

(4) The service has sufficient clear floor space of 163.38 m² within the 5 care rooms and combined with clear floor space of Casa Dei Bambini of 40.96 m² this gives a total of 204.34 m². Providing space for a total number of 108 pre-school children at any one time of which 68 will be full day care.