

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015KY083
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Name of Service:	Mounthawk Montessori School & Busy Bees Nursery
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Address of Service:	Clongherbrien, Tralee, Co. Kerry
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Eircode:	V92 Y424
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Quirke Crowley
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	07/08/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	49	PM	38
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	13 Market Square, Mallow, Cork. P51 DD5Y
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Inspection undertaken by:	E. Friel
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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	N/A
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Description of service

Mounthawk Montessori and Busy Bees Nursery is a private early years care and education facility providing both Montessori and Reggio Emilia play based curricula. It has been in operation since 1999 offering a choice of full-time, part-time and sessional services. The service caters for children aged from 2 – 6 years of age, operating from Monday to Friday, fifty-one weeks of the year, facilitating the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) Scheme in both the morning and afternoon. A school age service is available from 13:30 pm until 18:15 pm.

Mounthawk Montessori and Busy Bees Nursery is located in Clogherbrien in Tralee, County Kerry. It operates from a purpose-built, single storey, childcare building which currently operates five care rooms namely; Butterflies, Garden Studio, Orchard, Art and Busy Bees and an outdoor sessional service - Casa Dei Bambini. There are adult and child sanitary facilities both indoors and outdoors and a kitchen is located within the service. A car park is available at the front and at the side of the service.

Staffing

There are twenty staff employed in the service, fifteen of whom were working directly with the children on the day of inspection, including the registered provider.

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 inspection 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, person in charge, 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) The registered provider ensured that there was a designated person in charge and named persons available to deputise.
 - (b) The staff roster indicated that either the designated person in charge or named persons were available in the service while the early years children were present.
 - (c) A detailed management structure was displayed in the lobby of the service which included photographs and a biography of each staff member including their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) Recruitment files for all twenty adults, including the registered provider, were reviewed;
- (a) (b) There were twenty-four validated references from previous employers and sixteen validated references from sources other than past employers.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures were available for all twenty adults. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) International police disclosures were available for three adults who had lived outside of the State for a period of six consecutive months or longer as adults.
- (4) There was evidence that all twenty adults had attained major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or above 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.
- (2) Subject to paragraphs (4) and (5), a registered provider of a full day care service or a part-time day care service shall ensure that at all times the minimum ratio of adults to children specified in column (3) of Part 1 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) thereof at that reference number is satisfied.
- (8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-
- (a) a registered provider of a pre-school service other than a child-minding service or a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that there are at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children at all times.
- (2) The minimum adult/child ratios were maintained at all times. Three of the six areas were in operation on the day of inspection namely; Garden Studio, Orchard and Busy Bees.
- Garden Studio (2 years – 3 years)
- There were two full day care, three part-time and three sessional children in attendance with two adults in the morning. In the afternoon there were five children in attendance with two adults.
- The Orchard (2 years 6 months – 4 years)
- There were eighteen full day care and three part-time children in attendance with five adults in the morning. In the afternoon there were eighteen children in attendance with three adults.
- Busy Bees (3 years 6 months – 6 years)
- There were twenty children, including seven school age children, in attendance with three adults in the morning. In the afternoon there were fifteen children, including four school age children, in attendance with three adults.
- (8)
- (a) The staff roster indicated that there were at least 2 adults on the premises at all times.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1) A review of twelve children's pre-school records was carried out, all records were found to contain the necessary particulars, (a) – (i), above.
- (3) The records were open to review on the premises by the inspector.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

- Food, provided by parent's/guardians, was served during the day and was observed to be healthy and nutritious. Staff stated breakfast is available in the morning between 7.30 am and 8.30am, mid-morning snack was observed being served from 10.00 am in the outdoor area of the Garden Studio care room. Examples consisted of brown bread and butter, mixed berried fruits, cheese and yogurts.
- Hot lunches including pesto pasta, spaghetti bolognese, and rice and curry were observed being reheated in a microwave at 12 noon by a staff member. A mid-afternoon snack was available from 3.00 pm.
- Children were observed having access to age and stage appropriate cutlery and crockery in the Busy Bees care room. Water was readily available from easily accessible shelving which contained individual children's water bottles.
- Children were observed accessing the sanitary area independently in the outdoor area with staff nearby to provide support and reminders to wash hands.
- In each room and outdoor area, the children had the opportunity to rest or relax with soft seating in the form of child size vinyl couches, circle shapes, and matting in the designated cosy areas.
- While children had the opportunity to play in the indoor care rooms all children were outdoors on the day of inspection where they had space to explore and play with the toys, materials and natural resources.

SUPPORTING CHILDREN'S RELATIONSHIPS:

- Staff members sat with the children during snack time, the atmosphere was noted to be relaxed with the adults and children engaged in social conversation.
- Children requiring a longer time to eat their food were observed being accommodated without being rushed.
- Staff were actively engaged with groups of children throughout the day. They were heard supporting children's language in a variety of ways including, discussing, questioning, modelling, commentating, and following the children lead and extending their activities.

- Staff stated that a number of methods of communication were used to and inform and receive information with parents/guardians. Examples included a social media page, individual messaging application, verbally at drop off and collection, emails and phone calls.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

- Care rooms and play areas in both the indoor and outdoor spaces, were laid out in clearly defined areas with a variety of open-ended resources and materials which provided opportunities for learning across all developmental areas.
- The Orchard and Busy Bees care rooms and the Casa Dei Bambini structure outdoors had a variety of Montessori materials including a language area with letters, maths area with numbers and a nature area with natural materials, knobbed cylinder puzzles, dressing frames, rods and practical life skill materials.
- The materials and resources were laid out in baskets and boxes which were easily accessible to the children and offered choice and independence.
- Adult chairs were available in all areas. Children had access to age and stage appropriate tables and chairs where they had the opportunity of sitting individually or in a group. Individual floor mats were available for children to create their own space to engage in their self-chosen activity.
- Children's individual artwork, created from a variety of natural materials and paint, was colourfully displayed in lit frames throughout the setting.
- A new covered pergola had been erected, next to the art room, since the last inspection, providing an additional covered outdoor area for the children to play in all weathers.

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 was secured upon arrival. A bell was available to alert staff and an adult was present in the lobby at all times, preventing unauthorised adults from entering the building and unsupervised children from exiting the building.
- The indoor kitchen door and adult toilet doors were inaccessible to the children. They were key operated with the key being secured out of reach of the children.
- Visibility circles were noted on low-level glass doors providing a visual notification to prevent children banging into them.
- The windows in each care room were fitted with restrictors ensuring children could not exit or fall from them.
- The indoor and outdoor toys and equipment appeared in good condition and in a good state of repair.
- Heavy equipment and storage units were secured to prevent them tipping or falling onto a child.
- Outdoor waste was stored in a newly built storage area, not accessible to the children.
- Cleaning agents stored in the care rooms and in the sanitary areas were positioned on high shelving which was inaccessible to the children.
- Flexes and cables from phones, air conditioning units and radios were observed to be secured, out of reach of the children.
- The outdoor play perimeter at the back of the service was secured by concrete walls, high wooden fencing, high hedging and two wooden gates with sliding bolts placed out of reach of the children. The front of the service is secured with a concrete wall and metal gates.

Infection Control:

- The inspector observed that all of the sinks in use by the adults and the children were supplied with thermostatically controlled hot water, within the recommended limit of 43°C, dispensing soap, blue roll and pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
- Each area had a fridge. Children's perishable food was observed being removed from the fridge in the kitchen and being reheated at lunch time.

- Children's coats were stored on hooks and bags were stored on shelving away from the floor area.
- Staff were observed sweeping the floor in the Busy Bees care room after lunch, keeping the area clean.
- Cleaning schedules for the indoor areas were observed to be completed and up to date.

Administration of Medication:

- Anti-febrile medication, stored in its original container, was observed to be stored out of reach of the children.

Safe Sleep:

- Stackable beds and individual bed linen were available for children who required to sleep or rest. No children were observed sleeping on the day of inspection.

Fire Safety:

- Emergency fire doors, facing out into the carpark, were fitted with alarms to alert the adults in the service should a child push the bars on the doors.
- The fire extinguishers in the service were secured by brackets on the walls in the service.
- Fire assembly points were visible in both the back and front of the service.
- All emergency fire exit doors were unobstructed.

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) Certificates were available to evidence that sixteen adults in the service had First Aid Responder (FAR) training completed. The staff roster indicated that a person trained in first aid was available at all times.

(2) (a) (b) The suitably equipped first aid boxes, easily accessible by the adults, were available at all times, in all areas including the care rooms, the Casa Dei Bambini structure outdoors and in the indoor kitchen.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (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) Written records were available of the monthly fire drills which took place in the service. The date recorded of the most recent fire drill was noted as 6 August 2024 and was carried out by in the Busy Bees care room.
 - (b) Written records were available detailing number, type and maintenance of firefighting equipment in the service and the smoke alarms. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarm records were dated 11 October 2023 for both the indoor and outdoor services.
- (2)
- (c) Both the firefighting equipment certificates and the smoke alarm certificates were open to review on the day of inspection.
- (4) The notice of the fire evacuation procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were located on the walls of each care room beside the emergency fire exit doors and in the outdoor Casa Dei Bambini structure.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was insured. A certificate was available to evidence that the service was insured for 108 full day care children. The expiry date was noted as 27 March 2025. Details included cover for public liability and fire and theft.