

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015LK013		
Name of Service:	Ardagh Montessori School		
Address of Service:	Main Street, Ardagh, Co. Limerick		
Eircode:	V42 VN26		
Name of Registered Provider:	Martina McGrath		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	19/03/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Offices, 2 nd Floor, Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.		
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan		
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		

Description of service

Ardagh Montessori school is a sessional pre-school service, located in a village of Ardagh in Co. Limerick. It operates Monday to Friday, 9.00am to 12.00md. The facility can cater for a maximum of 33 preschool children at any one time. On the day of inspection there were 20 preschool children registered to attend the service. The school operates from 2 playrooms indoors and from an outdoor play area at the rear of the premises. A service for school aged children is provided each afternoon.

Staffing

The registered provider is the designated person in charge at the service. There are 3 additional staff employed to work in the pre-school. All staff hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

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*

(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 was the designated person in charge. She was available on the day of the inspection and there was a named person who could deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was present in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)(a) There were written references, from past employers, available in respect of each staff working at the service.

(b) Where past employer references were not provided, references from reputable sources such as schools and colleges were supplied.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 4 staff. However, in the case of 1 staff member the service did not adhere to the re-vetting timeframes as outlined in the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice, requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years. Please refer to the information outlined under regulation 23 of this report.

(d) Police vetting was available for 1 staff member who had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4) All staff members held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 service operates a morning session from 9.00am to 12.00md. On the day of the inspection there were 14 pre-school children present with 3 staff members. The adult child ratio was compliant with the requirements of Regulation 11.

(3) At all times the registered provider ensured that the minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to in the service.

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:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and parents provided the children with healthy snack options and drinks for lunch time. Perishable foods were stored in a fridge until required each day.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets located next to the classroom. Hot water, liquid soap and paper handtowels were available to ensure hygienic washing of hands. Wash handbasins were also available in both the preschool rooms.

A change of clothes was available for all children if needed. Outdoor raingear and wellingtons were accessible for all children to ensure they could play outside in all weather conditions.

A sheltered covered area was available outdoors and children spend long periods of time outside every day. A large, grassed area was also accessible at the rear of the premises. To the front of the building children had space to use a selection of ride on bikes and trikes in an enclosed yard near the main entrance.

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 front door of the facility was secured and a staff member was required to allow access to all entering the service.

All emergency exits and fire doors were unobstructed.

There was no blind or curtain cords hanging freely.

All toys, furniture and play equipment were in good condition and free from sharp edges or corners. No broken toys were noted on the premises or in the outdoor play areas.

No flexes or cables were located within reach of children.

Infection Control:

A detailed infection control policy was in place and all staff were familiar with the procedures outlined in the policy. All tables and consistent touch surfaces were cleaned on a regular basis throughout the day.

Exclusion periods from the service were communicated to all parents if a child had an infectious illness.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting was available for 1 staff member. However, this vetting disclosure was not dated within the previous three years in adherence to the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice 'EYI-RN12.3 Renewal of Garda Vetting'.
2. The timber gate and frame at the top right corner of the outdoor garden was unsteady. To ensure each child's safety and no unauthorised access to or from the outdoor play area, all exits from the outdoor play area must be secured and made safe.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Garda vetting has been received for the required staff member and is in date.
2. The timber gate and frame leading from the outdoor play area at the rear of the premises was repaired and secured. This prevented any child gaining unauthorised access from the outdoor area and prevented any unauthorised access to this area of the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. A copy of the required garda vetting has been forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate
2. Photographic evidence of the repair works were forwarded to the office of the Early Years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified has been adequately addressed.

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.

Compliance Information

- (a) The building appeared to be of sound and stable structure both internally and externally and no obvious defects were noted on inspection.
- (b) The premises indoors appeared safe and secured. A buzzer system on the entrance door ensured all who entered the building were checked in by an authorised person.
- (c) All areas were well lit by natural light and by artificial light when needed. There was no evidence of mould, mildew, stale smells, stuffiness or condensation.
- (d) The areas outside were all well maintained and routine cleaning schedules were in place for all internal and external areas.
- (e) There were an adequate number of toilets, and wash hand basins in the service for the number of children and adults in the service. A disability toilet was available if required.

Non-Compliance Information

- (d) The radiators in the children's bathrooms had paint peeling from the surfaces exposing areas of rust. The toilet cubicles areas must be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition at all times.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (d) The radiators were all repainted in the children's sanitary accommodation.

Supporting documentation submitted

- (d) Photographic evidence of the painting works completed were forwarded to the Office of the Early years Inspectorate.

Summary Comment

The inspector has reviewed the actions and evidence submitted. The non-compliance identified has been adequately addressed.