

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH003		
Name of Service:	Abbey Montessori		
Address of Service:	Newtown Lodge, Newtown, Trim, Co. Meath		
Eircode:	C15 YC53		
Name of Registered Provider:	Elva Leavy		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date(s) of Inspection:	11/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM No.
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre Commons Road Navan, Co. Meath		
Inspection undertaken by:	C Tunney		
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

Abbey Montessori Early Years' Service is established since 2011, the service is situated in a converted dwelling adjacent to the registered providers home in an urban setting on the outskirts of Trim Town. The service provides a sessional service for children from 2 years to 6 years. The service caters for up to 44 pre-school children and operates from 9:00am -12:00 midday; 9.30am to 12.30pm and from 13:00hrs to 16:00hrs. The service consists of four pre-school rooms with sanitary facilities with an outdoor play area to the rear of the pre-school. Additionally, an outdoor preschool is facilitated to the side of the pre-school.

Staffing

The registered provider and five staff members are employed in the service. Additionally, a staff member employed under the access and inclusion model was present 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/ safety and premises. The inspections may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under Regulations 9 Management & Recruitment, Regulation 11 Staffing Levels, Regulation 15 Records of pre-school Child, Regulation 19 Health, Welfare & Development of Child, Regulation 16 Record in relation to Pre-school Service, Regulation 21 – Equipment and

materials, Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of Child, Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance, Regulation 26 Fire Safety Measures, Regulation 27 Supervision and Regulation 29 Premises. The three Pre-School Room indoors and the Outdoor Pre-school Room were inspected. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulation(s) within this report.

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.

(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 of the service and a named person was appointed to deputise as required.

(b) The deputy was the designated person in charge when the inspector arrived unannounced, and the registered provider arrived shortly afterwards.

(c) There was a clear management structure in place and the management structure was displayed in the hallway.

(2) Following a review of previous inspection records and in discussion with the registered provider, there were no new staff members employed since the last inspection 15/6/22.

(4) The staff members held a major award in Early childhood Care and Education at Level 8.

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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the service.

(3) The adult to child ratios were correct when the inspector arrived unannounced to the service and remained so throughout the inspection.

The following adult to child ratios were observed:

- In **Pre-school Room Blue** there were 7 pre-school children aged between 3 years to 4 years attending for a sessional service, being cared for by 1 adult.
- In **Pre-school Room Yellow** there were 10 pre-school children aged 4 years to 5 years attending for sessional service, being cared for by 1 adult.
- In **Pre-school Room Red** there were 9 pre-school children aged between 3 years to 4 years attending for a sessional service, being cared for by 1 adult and 1 adult working under the access and inclusion model.
- **Pre-school Room White** was not in operation.
- In the **Outdoor Pre-school Room** there were 10 pre-school children aged between 3 years to 6 years attending for a sessional service, being cared for by 1 adult (the second adult who normally works in the outdoor pre-school was not present on the day of inspection).

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) Twelve registration forms were reviewed and found to be appropriately completed with information as specified in sub-sections (a) to (i) of this regulation.

(3) (c) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person and provided to the inspector as requested.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 16 – Record in relation to pre-school service

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing is kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the information as prescribed in Regulation 16 (a) to (k).

(3) The records were open to inspection by an authorised person. It was noted that information pertaining to staff were displayed on the noticeboard in the hallway for parents' attention.

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

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

(2) A registered provider shall ensure that no corporal punishment is inflicted on a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that no practices that are disrespectful, degrading, exploitive, intimidating, emotionally or physically harmful or neglectful are carried out in respect of a pre-school child whilst attending the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a) The following examples demonstrate how children's learning, development and well-being was facilitated in the service:

Basic needs:

- The staff members were observed to be caring and attentive to the children and were responsive to the children's individual needs and preferences.
- The children brought their snacks from home and included sandwiches, cheese, yogurts, and fruit pieces. The children were observed enjoying their snack in a relaxed manner.
- Staff members were predictable and informed the children in advance of the next activity, which allowed the children time for transitions, behaviour problems were not noted on the day of inspection.
- The children which were facilitated in indoor pre-school rooms enjoyed their outdoor play time. The children in the Outdoor Pre-school spent time in the outdoors and in the cabin for specific activities.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The staff members were observed to engage in respectful and supportive interactions with the children in their care. The staff members used warm tones of voice and addressed the children by their name. The children were observed to interact comfortably with the staff members present and sought out staff for assistance and support when necessary and the staff members encouraged and supported the children in their play choices.

Planning and Assessment

- There was evidence that staff members engage in planning and assessment. The inspector noted themes relating to the development of the child that were carried out throughout the year and displayed in the care rooms such as “World Book Day” (included a visit from the librarian), “Our community” including a visit from a local Gardai, “Construction Day” with parental involvement. This work demonstrated the service is embedded in the local community. Additionally, the children have “Learning Journals” with photographic evidence of activities completed throughout the year.

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

There was adequate and suitable furniture and play equipment and materials available to support play experiences both indoors and outdoors in the service.

- Tables and chairs in each room were appropriate to the age and stage of development of pre-school children attending the specific care rooms.
- Play materials and play equipment in the Pre-school Rooms were visible and easily accessible to the children on open shelving at their height. Play materials and equipment were laid out in well organised interest areas such as Montessori equipment areas, Our Creative Corner, including Home Areas with support equipment, our Family Areas, Our Birthday Celebrations, construction zones, musical instruments, arts and crafts areas and reading/ relaxation areas. Theme of the week such as Nurses and Doctors, with a Nurses and Doctors set.
- A suitable range of books were available in each Pre-school Room.
- Children’s artwork was displayed on the walls in the rooms which acknowledged the work the children had mastered.
- The outdoor play areas were equipped with age-appropriate play materials and equipment to facilitate the children to engage in energetic play and physical activity such as slides, swing, sand areas, muddy kitchen areas.

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

The registered provider ensured all reasonable measures were put in place to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending such as;

General Safety

- The indoor premises was appropriately secured to prevent pre-school children from exiting unsupervised and restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- Cleaning agents were stored out of reach of children.
- Children do not avail of outdoor play in the front of the pre-school, except when been facilitated for a specific purpose. On the day of inspection, the children were brought out on a nature hunt, the entrance gate was closed, and the children and staff returned indoors after their collection.

Infection Control:

- The premises, its play equipment and materials were maintained in a satisfactory state.
- Warm running water (indoors) was available in the children's sanitary areas, along with a supply of liquid soap, paper towels and foot operated bins.
- Prior to the children's snack, tables were cleaned.
- Disposable paper towel was available for hand drying.
- The registered provider confirmed correct procedures in relation to the maintenance of the compost toilet and waste disposal according to the manufacturer's instructions is carried out on a daily/weekly basis.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. A portable water station was noted in the cabin of the Outdoor Pre-school. The water was cold and not warm to encourage good hand washing practices.
2. On two occasions noted by the inspector, two children who used a compost toilet did not approach the portable water station to wash their hands, the staff member did not remind or assist the children to carry out good hand hygiene which was an infection control risk.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A thermal sink will be installed to ensure access to warm water during the Halloween mid-term break.
There are 5 thermostatically controlled sinks in the school which the children have access to but an additional one in the outdoor area will be installed.
2. Policy and procedure attached, a review has been carried out and we will be more vigilant to hand washing.

Summary Comment

The registered provider has given assurances that staff will be more vigilant of children's hand washing practices, this will be reviewed at the next inspection.

The response from the registered provider in relation to the provision of a warm water supply at the outdoor area has not been accepted by the inspectorate. This non-compliance remains outstanding.

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)A record was kept of each child's time of arrival and departure on a daily basis by the staff members.

(3)A system was in place to ensure that no person other than the children's parents / guardians, employees or authorised visitors can enter the pre-school. A visitor's book was maintained, there was evidence that visitors were requested to record their attendance, the inspector was requested to record her attendance and departure time.

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) The registered provider ensured a person trained in First Aid Response (FAR) training was at all times immediately available to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) The first aid box was suitably equipped and safely stored in readily accessible positions in the care rooms out of the reach of children identified by clear signage.

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-*
- (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) There were records of monthly fire drills carried out in the service, the last recorded fire drill took place on 24th April 2023.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms in the premises, which were last serviced in January 2023.
- (2) (c) The fire records were available and open to inspection by an authorised person.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed in the premises.

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

On the day of inspection, the pre-school children were supervised at all times.

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 adequately insured. The expiry date on the insurance certificate was 27/03/24.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-
(e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.

Compliance Information

(e) There were four toilet facilities available in the main building for the number of pre-school children attending the service which was adequate.

Non-Compliance Information

(e) Inadequate toilet facilities were provided at the building used for the outdoor pre-school as a portable compost toilet was provided in the corner of the room. The toilet area was not appropriately sealed off from the care room to prevent foul and contaminated air circulating into the care room. A saloon style door was provided, and the walls did not extend from floor to ceiling. Suitable extract ventilation was not provided at this sanitary accommodation.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Corrective Action

There are 4 toilets available for the children to use which is in line with regulation for our service and number of children enrolled. There is an additional toilet in the outdoor space which is a welcome addition. Registered provider had acknowledged that 1 out of the 4 walls of this cubicle is not floor to ceiling, that being the door. On review we have decided to remove this toilet space and install a standalone toilet adjacent to the shelter area during the Halloween mid-term break, we are waiting on the carpenter to construct this for us.

Preventive Action

We will review the regulation and ensure we meet the requirements for ventilation when constructing the toilet space.

Summary Comment

The registered provider stated in the corrective action submitted that the toilet will be removed from the pre-school room and a standalone toilet adjacent to the shelter area a thermal sink will be installed during the Halloween mid-term break. (The inspectorate acknowledges that 4 toilets are available to the children indoors however the children in the Outdoor ECCE service do not avail of these sanitary facilities). Regulation 29 remains outstanding and will be reviewed at the next inspection.