

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

<b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>	TU2015MH072		
<b>Name of Service:</b>	Headfort Montessori School Ltd		
<b>Address of Service:</b>	Headfort Demense, Headfort Estate, Kells, Co. Meath		
<b>Eircode:</b>	A82 H7P2		
<b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>	Oliva Carry, Susan Baugh		
<b>Service type:</b>	Part Time, Sessional		
<b>Date of Inspection:</b>	17/09/2024		
<b>No of pre-school children:</b>	AM	26	PM 0
<b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>	Tusla Early Years Inspectorate Meath Child & Parent Support Hub, Commons Road, Navan, Co. Meath		
<b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>	D. Murray		
<b>Title:</b>	Early Years Inspector		
<b>Authority to Inspect</b>			
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).			
<b>Conditions if applicable</b>	Not Applicable		

### Description of service

Headfort Montessori School Ltd provides part-time and sessional care to pre-school children from 2 to 6 years. A school aged service is also provided. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Programme (ECCE) and operates from 08.45 am to 13:45pm.

The service consists of 3 care rooms, Rooms A,B &C, an office, staff room/kitchen and sanitary facilities. An outdoor space was situated to the front of the premises.

### Staffing

The 2 registered providers employ 4 childcare staff who were all 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/ 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 wish to acknowledge the cooperation of the registered providers, 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.*

*(6A) Paragraph (4) shall not apply to an employee of a registered provider where - (a) the registered provider receives funding for the employment of the employee pursuant to a scheme funded by the Minister and known as the Access and Inclusion Model, and (b) the employment of the employee is for the purpose of providing support, pursuant to the scheme referred to in subparagraph (a), for a child attending the service to enable the child to participate in the programme known as the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) funding Programme.”*

## Compliance Information

- (1) (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.
- (b) A designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced to carry out the inspection.
- (2) Six staff files were reviewed.
- (a)&(b) Twelve validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.
- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for the 6 staff. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
- (d) Police vetting was available for 4 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.
- (4) All pre-school childcare staff had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above on the National Framework of Qualifications or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.
- (6) (a) One staff member was employed under the scheme known as the Access and Inclusion Model.

### 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) On the morning of the inspection there were 2 registered providers and 4 childcare staff working directly with the 26 children attending the service.
- (2) The following adult to child ratios were observed when the service was operating at capacity:
- Room A** had 2 adults providing care and education to 6 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years, 5 children were attending on a sessional ECCE basis with 1 child attending on a part-time basis.
- Room B** had 2 adults providing care and education to 11 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years all attending on a sessional basis.
- Room C** had 2 adults providing care and education to 9 children ranging in age from 2 years 8 months to 5 years all attending on a sessional basis.
- (8) (a) According to the staff roster 2 adults were present on the premises at all times.

### 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) The following observations were made on how each child's learning, development and well-being was facilitated within the daily life in the service:

##### Basic needs:

- Children moved about the room freely engaging in tabletop activities, free play and imaginary role play.
- Children's individual needs were well supported by the staff members. During activities children were offered choices and sought out the staff members for praise, encouragement and reassurance.
- The service provided the morning snack at 11 am which consisted of crackers, carrot sticks, cucumber, oranges and pears with water to drink. Additional snacks were available for the children who remained in the service up to 13:45pm. Staff members were observed chatting with the children at snack time, helping the children when required whilst encouraging conversation and extending interactions.
- The service embraces outdoor play and learning. Children were observed enjoying imaginative, energetic and messy outdoor play with both their peers and staff members.

##### Supporting relationships around children:

- Transitions were handled smoothly as the children were given ample time to complete one activity before starting the next.
- The adults were observed promoting positive behaviour and supported children to find positive solutions when they experienced challenge in sharing play equipment and materials.
- Parents were greeted at collection time with friendly conversation overheard. The new children appeared happy and relaxed in their new environment.

## 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-
- (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, or

#### Compliance Information

- (1)(b) Within the care rooms there were couches, mats and cushions for children to take a break from activities and rest, if needed.
- (3)(a) The outdoor space to the front of the premises was enclosed by wooden fencing with a gate. The surface area consisted of gravel. The service also has access to the large green area for group activities and a wooded area for nature walks which belongs to the main primary school.

## 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

- The care rooms had areas of interest with supporting equipment which incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts and a range of suitable toys.
- Equipment in the outdoor space included playhouses, mud kitchen with play equipment, sand box, digging area, tyres, trunks of trees, wooden benches for outdoor activities, saucer swing and lots of trees with branches which provided the opportunity for challenging and risky play.

### 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:

- On the day of inspection both the indoor and outdoor environment appeared safe. The registered providers and staff members had a clear understanding of their role and range of responsibilities in ensuring the safety of the children attending the service.

##### Infection Control:

- The hand washing policy was implemented in practice with appropriate hand washing for staff and children at all times. Liquid soap and hand paper towel was available. The service was clean with cleaning schedules maintained on a daily basis.

#### Non-Compliance Information

##### Infection Control:

In the sanitary facilities at the end of the corridor, the water at the sinks were cold to touch which was not adequate for effective handwashing.

#### Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective & Preventive Action

##### Infection Control:

The fuse in the switch for the hot water thermostat has been replaced and will be checked on a daily basis to ensure the water is warm.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

##### Infection Control:

Photographic evidence of light working on the thermostat switch and water thermometer.

#### Summary Comment

The registered providers in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan have addressed the non-compliances for regulation 23 Infection Control, the response received has been reviewed and accepted.

## 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 service provided evidence that a person had up to date First Aid Responders course and was available at all times to the children attending the pre-school service.
- (2)(a) and (b) A suitably equipped first aid box was available and safely stored in the premises.

## 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.

### Compliance Information

- (1)(a) A written record was available of the fire drills completed in the service. The last recorded fire drill took place on the 06/06/2024. The service was closed for the months of July and August 2024.
- (b) A record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance record of the fire fighting equipment and mains powered smoke alarms on the premises. The fighting equipment was last serviced in May 2024. The mains powered smoke alarms were last serviced on the 17/07/2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was conspicuously displayed on the premises.

## 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 for 44 children at any one time attending the service. The policy showed that the service was insured from 28/11/2023 to the 27/11/2024.

## 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.*

#### Non-Compliance Information

(e) In the children's sanitary facilities at the end of the corridor there were no toilet roll holders available in the toilet cubicles. The toilet roll was placed on the toilet cistern out of reach.

#### Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

##### Corrective and Preventive Action

(e) Toilet roll holders are now available in the children's toilets at the end of the corridor. The registered providers will ensure that the holders remain in place and that the toilet roll is accessible to the children on a daily basis.

##### Supporting documentation submitted

Photographic evidence of toilet roll holders mounted to the wall.

#### Summary Comment

The registered provider in the Corrective Action and Preventive Action plan has addressed the non-compliances for regulation 29(e), the response received has been reviewed and accepted.