

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015MH087
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Name of Service:	Kentstown Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Octave House, Kentstown, Navan, Co. Meath
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Eircode:	C15 D579
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Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline McDonnell
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	02/05/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	36	PM	8
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Family Resource Centre, Common's Road, Navan, Co. Meath
Inspection undertaken by:	AM Cunningham
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

Kentstown Montessori School is operating a sessional and part -time service. The service can accommodate up to 44 pre-school children attending at any one time. The operating hours are 08.00am to 18.00hrs operating a sessional service 09.00am-12.00pm and afternoon session 12.30pm to 15.30pm. A school aged service is also available until 18.00hrs each weekday. The age range catered for is 2 years to 12 years The service consists of two care rooms and sanitary accommodation adjoining. The outdoor area is available to the back of the premises and fencing is erected around the premises

Staffing

There are 12 staff members employed in the service, this includes the registered provider, 8 childcare practitioners , 2 cleaners and a care taker.

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, 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.

(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) (a)&(b) Twelve staff files were reviewed, which included the registered provider 8 childcare staff, the care taker and two cleaners.

Twenty-four validated written references were available either from a past employer or from a reputable source.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 12 staff which were all within the three-year requirement.

(d) Police vetting was available for 2 staff members who had resided outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months as an adult.

(4) Nine childcare staff members had a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and 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) On the day of inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.

(2) The adult/child ratio was correct;

Scoil Bui Three staff members (one staff providing AIM support) cared for 16 children attending a sessional service and 2 children attending parttime time care (aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years).

Scoil Glas Four staff members (two staff providing AIM support) cared for 12 children attending a sessional service and 6 children staying for parttime care (aged between 2 years 8 months to 5 years).

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.*

Compliance Information

Basic needs of Children

- A healthy nutritious snack in line with the healthy eating policy of the service was provided for the children attending the service by their parents.
- Children’s personal care and cleanliness was attended to by the adults in a timely fashion. Tissues were freely available in the room.
- The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to the age and stage of development, including hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings.
- A change of clothes and wet outdoor gear is available, if required.

Supporting Relationships around the Children

- There is a notably warm and welcoming atmosphere in the setting. Relationships between staff and the children are extremely supportive, reciprocally warm and consistently positive.
- An appropriate daily routine is in place which allocate times for child – initiated play and learning and adult planned and facilitated activities.
- Transitions are clearly announced and signaled by staff. Children are given time to complete activities at their own pace before joining the next activity. This approach respects the children’s learning engagements and results in smooth flow in the routine.
- Snack time is a very social event with animated conversations and discussions. A rolling lunch is operated in the service, which involves the children choosing when they have their snack which also builds children’s independence, confidence, esteem and self-awareness.
- The preschool room doors were open to facilitate children to move freely between the indoor and outdoor area as they wished. Staff encourage children to be independent and to develop self-care skills at every opportunity.
- Individual framed family photographs were placed around the care rooms and children were observed carrying their family photo and happily showing their peers.
- Children were heard proudly practicing their graduation songs which they did with great enthusiasm and fun.

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,

Compliance Information

(1)(b) Rest/relaxation areas are developed in both care rooms. Sleep mats are available should a child wish to take a rest.

(3)(a) The outdoor area is safe and secure, surrounded by a fence and gates.

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

- Both care rooms were well resourced with play materials and equipment which were laid out in interest areas which were spacious and uncluttered. The play materials and equipment incorporated natural/sensorial materials, art and crafts, home corners, montessori equipment and a wide range of suitable toys and books. All play materials and equipment were easily accessible on open shelving at the children's height which encouraged active engagement and involvement.
- The outdoor area to the back of the service is very well resourced with toys and areas of interest. When weather is not permitting for outdoor play, an additional room is available in the outdoor area for children to participate in play. There is also a hard surface area with for example ride on toys, picnic benches, sand play, tuff tray for planting, and partially covered areas to change the children into boots or wet gear.

- The grass area is very inviting for children, well-developed and supported with equipment, lots of areas to play are available for example: slide, overhead covered sand pit, swing, tunnel, tyres, water play, covered mud kitchen, construction area and tree area that children can safely explore and enjoy.

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 following safety measures were in place on the day of inspection:

- All cleaning agents were stored out of reach of the children.
- The main door to the service was secured and the outdoor spaces were enclosed with walls and gates. These security measures ensured that a child did not exit unsupervised and restricted unauthorised persons from gaining access to the service and outdoor spaces.
- All play materials were placed on stable based shelving units. Play materials and equipment were observed to be safe and suitable for the developmental age of the pre-school children present in the service.
- The emergency exit doors were unobstructed.

Infection Control:

The inspector viewed the following infection control measures undertaken in the service to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of the children.

- Children were supported to wash their hands following outdoor play and before their lunch.
- The service was visibly clean and up to date documented cleaning schedules were on display.
- Foot-operated pedal waste bins were available in the service which facilitated the hygienic disposal of waste.
- The children's packed lunches, supplied from home, were refrigerated on arrival to the service which reduced the risk of bacteria growth in perishable food items.

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.

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 record was maintained of all fire drills which had been completed in the service. Fire drills were carried out monthly.
- (b) A record was kept of the number, type and maintenance of the fire extinguishers and smoke alarms which were serviced on the 26th November 2023. in the premises.
- (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 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a valid insurance certificate for 44 preschool children with an expiry date of 27th March 2025.