

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WD060
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Name of Service:	Newtown Montessori
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Address of Service:	Friends Meeting House, 61 Newtown Road, Newtown, Waterford, Co. Waterford
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Eircode:	X91 C66E
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fionnuala O'Regan
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	18/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	23	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Waterford Community Services, Cork Road, Waterford
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Inspection undertaken by:	M. Ryan.
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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	Not applicable
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Description of service

Newtown Montessori is privately owned and run by the registered provider. The service operates from part of the premises of The Society of Friends Meeting House in a suburban area of Waterford City. Two rooms are available for use, a kitchen, sanitary accommodation and the surrounding grounds of the premises for outdoor play. Newtown Montessori participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme offering a programme based on the Montessori approach to Early Childhood Care and Education. The service operates from 09:00hrs to 12:30hrs Monday to Friday for children aged between 2 and 8 months and 5 years of age.

Staffing

The registered provider works as part of the staff complement and employs two staff to work directly with the children in the service on a daily basis.

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.

The following regulations were covered on the day of the inspection.

Regulation 9 – Management and recruitment

Regulation 11 - Staffing levels

Regulation 19 - Health, welfare and development of child.

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*

(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-

- (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*

(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. The service also had a named person who was able to deputise as required.
- (b) The registered provider was part of the staff compliment and available throughout the inspection.

(2)

There was no change in the staff since the last inspection.

- (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been renewed in the last 36 months on behalf of staff working directly with the children.

(4)

There was evidence that all staff employed to work directly with the children held at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 8 on the National Qualifications Framework. There was evidence of continuous professional development and qualification certificates on file.

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, the staff: child ratios met the requirement for the Childcare Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016.
- 3)
In the green room there were 12 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff members. In the blue room there were 15 children from 3 to 5 years of age being cared for by 3 childcare staff

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-*
- (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

- (1)
(b) Regulation 19 was assessed through direct observation, review of records and discussion with staff. The following was observed and explained in relation to the provision of the programme of care and activities for the children attending the service.

The registered provider informed the inspector that the programme of care for the service was underpinned by the Montessori method of early childhood care and education. It was documented in the service's curriculum statement that "in order to follow a child's individual learning it was important to create and sustain interesting and challenging activities planned by the staff according to children's emerging interests". To help staff with this, the registered provider explained and demonstrated sentences and open-ended statement prompts displayed on the walls around the room such as "imagine if" and "I wonder what would happen if? The registered provider informed that the ethos of the service was to promote the positive possibilities for children so as to open their imagination to all potentialities.

The theme for the week was water safety and the registered provider explained that given the children were going on holidays in the coming weeks this was important. Some of the emerging interests that had developed from this theme were the harbor and Noah's ark. Songs with water themes were introduced and learned over the month of June. The atmosphere in the service was busy as the children engaged in the comfortable child friendly surroundings. Displays of children's projects were suspended from the ceiling such as the solar system and wall mounted large dinosaur cut outs, all of which added to the child centered feel of the room.

The registered provider demonstrated an natural ability to establish a bond with all children, it was observed that throughout the session children referred to the staff on first name terms while staff had frequent conversations with the children about their families and their animals.

The setting was well maintained with the use of two irregular shaped rooms. Both rooms had sufficient space for the children to move about and were appropriate to facilitate spaces for well-defined designated activity areas.

The registered provider spoke of the encouraging independence and developing co-operation between children, this ethos was observed at the lunch break. Three names were pulled from a bag for the children designated to help set the table. The tables were arranged together in the middle of the room with children's personalised table mats arranged on the these tables. The registered provider reflected on the importance of children respecting food and a thank you poem was recited before commencing eating. This food was brought from home and was observed to be nutritious such as risotto /pasta dishes and savory sandwiches with selections of fresh fruits. The children had access to drinking water throughout the duration of the session.

Throughout the morning in the bigger room children were observed using the extensive range of Montessori equipment with activities available and accessible to them on low level open shelving units. Children gathered around their tables doing practical life and sensorial activities while the staff who sat with them encouraged conversations about the texture and colour of these materials.

While in the second room children were observed moving freely between the zoned areas. A small group were engaged in the extensive well-resourced and equipped home corner. This area extended to one side of the room with kitchen and bedroom items such as a bed, cots and an ample supply of dolls. A further group of children were observed in the cosy carpeted reading area which had a display case of age-appropriate books.

Towards the end of the session children went outdoors where the grounds of the premises provided a grassed area and a large tarmacadamed space. Large trees in the adjoining secondary school offered shade and shelter. Children were observed enjoying the freedom of the outdoors with swings and slides for gross motor play, there was ample space for the use of ride on equipment on the tarmacadam. Some children were content sitting in the grassed area with the staff at the picnic tables, while others were observed enjoying playing at the two sand boxes and digging area.