

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH002		
Name of Service:	Bluebells Montessori		
Address of Service:	Killulagh, Delvin, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 ER2Y		
Name of Registered Provider:	Siobhan Walsh		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	28/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	21	PM NA
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Tusla, Child and Family Agency, SAP Office, St. Loman's Campus, Mullingar, Co Westmeath		
Inspection undertaken by:	C O'Connor Hughes		
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

This sessional service provides an Early Childhood Care and Education programme to children aged 2 to 6 years from 08:30-12:00 and 12:15 to 15:45. The service operates on a Monday to Friday basis.

The service is located in a purpose-built unit adjoining the registered provider's home with two pre-school rooms for the children's use. There is an outdoor play area and sheltered playroom at the back of the service.

Staffing

The designated person in charge and a staff member were present and working directly with the children on the 28 April 2023. The registered provider arrived at the service shortly after the inspector's arrival and stayed for the duration of the 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 inspections 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 co-operation of the registered provider, designated person in charge, staff member and children who were present on the day of the inspection.

Part II - Registration and Register

Regulation 8 - Notification of change in circumstances

(1) A registered provider of a pre-school service other than a temporary pre-school service shall, subject to paragraph (3), notify the Agency in writing of any proposed change in the details in relation to the pre-school service contained in the register pursuant to section 58C(2) of the Act or Regulation 7(2) at least 60 days before it is proposed that the change would take effect.

Compliance Information

The service had submitted a change in circumstance to the TUSLA registration office on the 28 March 2022 in respect of the services' opening hours from 08:30 to 12:00 and 12:15:15:45. This change in circumstance was accepted by the registration office.

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.*
- (3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*
- (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.

(6) Paragraph (4) shall not apply before 1 September 2021 to a person who-

(a) has signed a declaration on or before 30 June 2016 to the effect that he or she intends to retire from employment in a pre-school service before 1 September 2021, and

(b) is in possession of a letter from the Minister confirming that paragraph (4) shall not apply to him or her before that date.

(6A) is inserted by S.I. No.632 of 2016 CHILD CARE ACT 1991 (EARLY YEARS SERVICES) (AMENDMENT)

REGULATIONS 2016 which states; Regulation 9 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early

Years Services) Regulations (S.I. No. 221 of 2016) is amended - in paragraph (4), by the substitution of “paragraphs (5), (6) and (6A)” for “paragraphs (5) and (6)”, and (b) by the insertion of the following paragraph after paragraph (6): “)

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available in the service.

(b)

The designated person in charge and the registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

The registered provider stated that two new staff members were employed in the service since the last inspection on the 8 September 2021. The files of the new staff members were reviewed, and the following was noted;

(2)(a)

Two written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the new staff members.

(b)

Not applicable as references were available from a previous employer.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available in respect of the new staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required in respect of the new staff members as they had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The procedures in respect (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) were carried out by the registered provider prior to the employment of the new staff members.

(4)

The new staff members held a major award at Level 5 and Level 6 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

(6) (a)(b)

Not applicable, no employee had signed a declaration on or before the 30th of June 2016 to the effect that they intended to retire from employment in a pre-school service.

(6A)

One employee present was working directly with children under 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.

(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 minimum ratio of adults to children was exceeded during the inspection.
- (3)
There were twenty-one children attending the service supervised directly by the registered provider and two staff members.

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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

A sampling process has been used and eleven child records were inspected. Information relating to (a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(g)(h) and (i) was available in respect of the children attending the service.

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;*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

(1)

Written records of information in relation to the service in accordance with Regulation 16

(1)(a)(b)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h)(i)(j) and (k) were available and reviewed.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

Parental information was emailed to parents/ guardians prior to their child commencing in the service in respect of Regulation 16 (1)(a) to (g).

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 18 – Copy of Act etc.

A registered provider shall ensure that a copy of Part VIIA (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No. 40 of 2013)) of the Act and of these Regulations is kept on the premises and the said copies shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a child attending or proposing to attend the service,*
- (b) an employee, unpaid worker or contractor, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

Compliance Information

The registered provider presented a copy of the of Part V11A (inserted by section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013 (No.40 of 2013)) of the Act and Regulations for inspection of (a)(b)(c).

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)

Children were happy and comfortable wearing their own pyjamas and slippers as the theme of the day was pyjama day. Children enjoyed free play, singing songs and various play activities supported by staff.

A healthy morning snack was provided by their parents that included sandwiches, fruit, cheese and crackers with water to drink. Independence was encouraged as children set out their own snack and sat at low level tables talking to their peers. Staff were positive towards children as they used their individual names during activities, maintained eye contact and used soft language tones. A child who was upset as the Inspector was present was comforted and reassured by the staff member. Good transitions were observed as children were given a five-minute warning before moving on to the next activity.

The layout of the physical environment provided a full range of experiences for the children including physical, sensory, creative, manipulative and imaginative play. Areas of interest included dress up, home area, construction a shop, a hair salon and computer area. Montessori equipment and age/stage appropriate materials were accessible to children on low level shelving in both pre-school rooms. Children were observed to sit and relax in the rest area reading their story books.

The service operates in partnership with parents in the following ways; information updates displayed on a parent notice board, use of short messaging system (SMS) to communicate updates, verbal handover on collection, artwork folders are sent home to parents on regular basis, the child's learning journal is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term.

The service made links with the community as the fire fighters visited the children in October 2022.

The large outdoor play area provides multiple play experiences for children including a fairy garden, a sand house, a playhouse, a climbing frame with slides, a music wall, a bug motel and a garage. A sheltered outdoor classroom is located in the outdoor play area for children's use.

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:

Entry to the service was secure to prevent unauthorised access and to ensure children's safety.

The Inspector signed the visitors book on arrival.

A locked side gate was noted at the entrance to service. Parents drop and collect children at the entrance. Staff were observed to hand children over to their parent at the end of the morning session.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents.

Infection Control:

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks, after wiping their nose and after toileting.

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed.

Warm running water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The temperature recorded was 33 -37.8 degrees Celsius at the wash hand basin.

Foot operated pedal bins were available in pre-school room and in the sanitary accommodation for the hygienic disposal of waste.

Natural ventilation was noted through openable windows in the sanitary accommodation.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed. A fire assembly point was noted at the front of the service.

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)

An adult present was qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available in the premises.

(2)(a)

The first aid box was available in accessible and conspicuous location in the service.

(b)

A first aid box was accessible to children in the pre-school service.

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 firefighting 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 5 April 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The smoke alarms and the firefighting equipment were serviced in August 2023.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of current insurance cover for the number of children attending the service and the expiry date noted as 27 March 2024.