

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH039
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Name of Service:	Greenpark Montessori
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Address of Service:	128A, Green Park Meadows, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath
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Eircode:	N91 Y432
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Name of Registered Provider:	Mary Stenson
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	16/01/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	NA	PM	16
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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
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Description of service

This Early Years Service is operated by a private provider and provides the Early Childcare and Education Scheme.

The current hours of operation are 08:45 – 11:45 and 12:15 – 15:15.

The service is located in a single pre-school room accommodating 11 children, namely the Sunflowers room adjoining the home of the registered provider. A second pre-school room accommodating 9 children namely the Daisy and Lillies room was opened in September 2023. There is an outdoor play area available to the children attending the service. The Early Years service is located in Mullingar town.

Staffing

The registered provider and two adults were working directly with children on the 16 January 2024.

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, 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.

(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.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

The registered provider was present for the duration of the inspection.

Three staff files including the registered provider were reviewed and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of the staff members.

Two written references were available in respect of the registered provider.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the registered provider and staff members.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the registered provider and staff member had not lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The registered provider ensured that vetting procedures in respect of (2)(a)(b)(c)(d) was carried out prior to the employment of staff in the service.

(4)

The registered provider and staff members working directly with children attending the service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 to 6 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.

(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 maintained during the inspection.

(3)

There were sixteen children attending the service supervised directly by the three adults. It was observed that one adult worked directly with the children in the Sunflower and Daisy and Lilies rooms. The registered provider assisted the adults and children in both pre-school rooms throughout the inspection.

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 observed to enjoy the play activities during the morning session that included free play, circle time, painting pictures and outdoor play in both pre-school rooms.

Children were encouraged to be independent as they dressed for outdoor play assisted by staff as needed.

Children went to the toilet independently and washed their hands supervised by staff. Aprons were used to protect children's clothing while painting. A little helper system was in operation in the Sunflower room at snack time as one child brought the lunches to the children supported by the registered provider.

The staff were positive towards children and were familiar with each child and their personalities. Staff used individual names, maintained eye contact and conversed with the children during play activities, toileting and snack time. Children settling into the Daisy and Lillies room attended the service on a phased in basis.

Good teamwork was observed amongst staff.

The Sunflower and Daisy and Lillies room were bright and colourful. Children's artwork were displayed and included photographs of the children's family tree. Inclusion was noted in the service through a cultural, diversity and inclusion display. Low level tables and chairs were available for children's work. Age and stage appropriate toys and materials were accessible to children on low level shelving. Toys and equipment included a kitchen, dress up and a rest area with reading books located nearby.

The outdoor play area consisted of a cement surface. Children enjoyed playing physical games and riding on bicycles and tricycles supervised by staff. A shed for storage of toys and equipment was noted in the outdoor play area.

The service works in partnership with parents and guardians. The deputy person in charge stated newsletters are circulated to each family attending the service. A short messaging system is used to communicate with parents. (SMS). Each child has their own learning journal depicting their play and work activities. The child's journal is shared with parents at the end of the pre-school term. Parents were invited to attend one to one meeting to discuss their child's development and progress in the service.

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

Adequate and suitable furniture, play materials and work equipment were available in the Sunflower, Daisy and Lillies rooms in the service.

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 main entrance to both pre-school rooms were secure to ensure the safety of the children within. The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Indoor and outdoor risk assessments for the service were available for review. The Inspector signed the visitors book on arrival to the service.

Infection Control:

Warm running water was available at wash hand basins. The water temperature was recorded at 37 degrees Celsius. Hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation adjacent to both pre-school rooms.

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

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

Natural ventilation was noted in the Daisy and Lillies room and associated sanitary accommodation via openable windows. The mechanical ventilation was working in the sanitary accommodation in the Sunflower room.

A refrigerator was available for the storage of perishable goods.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was given at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was stored safely in the service if a child presented with a high temperature.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school rooms in the service. The fire assembly point was noted to the front of the service. Upon discussion the new staff member employed in the service demonstrated familiarity with the fire evacuation procedures in the service.

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

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

The records of arrival and departure reviewed verified that each child attending the service was checked in and out of the service by a staff member.

(3)(a)

All entry to the service with the exception of (i), (ii), (iii) and (iv) was approved by a staff member.

(4)

The visitor log is retained throughout the annual operation 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)

The registered provider and staff members were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was located in the pre-school rooms.

(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 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 for the completed monthly fire drills was available on the premises. The last fire drill was recorded as taking place on the 12 December 2023.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment and the smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 17 August 2023 and 25 September 2023 respectively.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in conspicuous positions 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. The expiry date noted was 23 April 2024.

Part IX - Inspection and Enforcement

Regulation 33 – Furnishing of information to agency

A registered provider shall furnish the Agency with such information as the Agency may reasonably require for the purpose of enforcing and executing these Regulations and the information shall be in such form, if any, as may be specified by the Agency.

Compliance Information

The registered provider furnished the required information during the inspection on the 16 January 2024.