

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH043		
Name of Service:	Belvedere Hills Nursery & Montessori Ltd.		
Address of Service:	Belvedere Hills, Mullingar, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 K2HC		
Name of Registered Provider:	Carmel Reynolds		
Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	03/07/2024		
No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM 52
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 & K. Murphy		
Title:	Early Years Inspectors		
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

The service is registered as a full day care service and accommodates children from 0 to 6 years of age. The service operates between the hours of 08:00 and 17:45 on a Monday to Friday basis.

The Early Years' Service is located in an adapted two storey dwelling consisting of five care rooms, three sleep rooms and a kitchen on the ground floor. Two care rooms, an office and staff room located on the first floor of the premises. Five pre-school rooms and one school age room were in operation on the day of the inspection. On-site parking and set down facilities are available to the front of the service. An outdoor play area is located at the back of the service. A sheltered area is provided in the outdoor play area. The service is located in a residential area in the town of Mullingar, Co. Westmeath.

Staffing

The designated person in charge, deputy designated person in charge, supervisor and twelve adults were working with children on the 3 July 2024. A cook was present in the service.

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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under

Regulation 19 (1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of Child.

Regulation 20 Facilities for Rest and Play.

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety and Welfare of child.

As a result, the scope of the inspection included:

Pod A (aged 1-2 years)

Pod B (aged 1-2 years and 2-3 years)

Pod C (2-3 years and 3- 4 years)

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 inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the designated person in charge, deputy person in charge, supervisor, staff 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

(1)
The designated person in charge submitted a change in circumstances to the TUSLA registration office since the last inspection on the 15 June 2022. This change 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*
- (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.*

(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 designated person in charge and a named person to deputise were available as required.

(b)

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

(c)

Evidence of the management structure was displayed in a prominent position in the service.

Twenty-one staff files were reviewed including the registered provider and the following was noted:

(2)(a)(b)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers or from a source other than a past employer in respect of the staff members and registered provider.

(c)

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

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 in respect of one staff member who had lived outside the state for a period of longer than six consecutive months.

(3)

The designated person in charge ensured that all staff were vetted prior to commencing employment in the service.

(4)

All staff members working directly with children attending the service and held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Levels 5 to 8 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.

Compliance Information

(1)

The minimum ratio of adults to children was maintained during the inspection.

(2)

There were fifty-two pre-school children and nine school age children attending the service supervised directly by fifteen adults including the designated person in charge, the deputy designated person in charge and the supervisor.

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)
In a sample review of twelve child enrolment records 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)

The service kept and maintained 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).

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

Information was available for parents in the service in respect of Regulation 16(1) (a) to (g) in a parent handbook given to parents prior to commencement of the pre-school term.

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

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 was available for inspection by (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)

Pods A, B and C

The children were supported to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including self-feeding, hand washing, toileting and caring for their belongings. This full day care service provides all meals and snacks. The menu displayed showed a variety of nutritious food provided for children attending on a full day care basis. Accessible potable water was available to children in the pre-school rooms.

Good communication was observed between the staff member and child during nappy changing which was carried out as per the displayed service procedure. Children were observed to play freely as they moved from one play experience to the next in their assigned pre-school rooms and in the outdoor play area.

A key person system is in operation in the service which helped to promote the emotional security for children. There was a calm and happy atmosphere in the service. Children were content with their carers and staff were

familiar with each child and their personality. Adults were observed to be positive towards children evidenced by individual names used, eye contact and praise for children on completion of activities. Good teamwork between the staff members was observed during the inspection.

Staff used a handheld electronic device was used to record photographs and narratives relating to the children's activities and daily life in the service. To support communication between the service and each child's family, a communication diary is in place for younger children attending pod A advising parents of the child's daily activities including feeding, sleeping and nappy changes.

The children's learning journals depicted each child's developmental progress and activities during the year and shared with parents.

A range of developmentally appropriate, challenging, creative and enriching experiences were available for all children. Areas of interest were noted in all pre-school rooms and included home areas, construction, arts and crafts, dress up and nature displays. Materials included paint, play dough, dolls, dolls houses, buggies, puzzles, blocks, trucks, animals and fine motor skill toys including pegboards, jigsaws and shape sorters.

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-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day, and

(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)(a)

Suitable play equipment was provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts, sensory play and home corners.

(b)

Cosy rest areas were noted in the pre-school rooms for children to rest and relax. Three separate sleep rooms were provided for children under the age of two to rest and sleep each room was equipped with four cots. Children over the age of two were observed to sleep on low level beds.

(3)(a)

The outdoor play area was secure surrounded by a high-level concrete wall. A sheltered section was available to provide year-round opportunities to play outdoors.

An absorbent surface area was noted. Toys and equipment included a climb/tunnel unit, a small wooden climb/slide unit, a large double climb/slide unit and a selection of bicycles and tricycles.

A wooden wigwam, a wooden tractor with seats and raised beds were noted in the area with a tarmac surface.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 22 – Food and drink

A registered provider shall ensure that adequate and suitable, nutritious and varied food and drink is available for each pre-school child attending the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

A menu plan was available in the service. Children's dietary requirements were accommodated. The service provides all meals and snacks to children attending on a full day care basis. All meals and snacks are prepared fresh on site by a cook. The morning snack consisted of beans on toast with orange segments.

The main meal service began at approximately 11:30 the cook served a choice of chicken, broccoli and pasta bake or beef stew with carrots, onions and mashed potato. Brown bread, yoghurt and apple and pear slices was on the menu for the evening snack. Additional food was available to the children. Some children availed of options to bring alternative or additional food or snacks from home to have during the day. Refrigerators were available for the storage of perishable goods in the pre-school rooms.

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 entrance door to the service was secure to ensure the safety of the children within the service. The service is accessed through a bell and intercom system to the reception area or directly to the pre-school rooms.

The service met the necessary safety requirements in respect of the indoor environment, toys and equipment and the safe storage of cleaning agents. Monthly safety checklists were in place for each pre-school room.

The inspectors signed the visitor book on arrival.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Cleaning schedules were available and reviewed. Warm water, paper hand towel and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. The water temperature recorded at the wash hand basins was 40 degrees Celsius.

Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks and after using the toilet. The nappy changing procedure observed was carried out as per the services' nappy changing procedure.

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

Natural ventilation was available through openable windows in the pre-school rooms and in the sanitary accommodation and nappy changing room.

Administration of Medication:

Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature and stored safely in the service. Medication was stored correctly in the service. The medication documentation was available and reviewed.

Safe Sleep:

A record of the colour, position and breathing of sleeping children was noted in an electronic sleep log for each individual child. Staff were observed to physically check sleeping children every ten minutes. The environmental temperature recorded in the three sleep rooms was 20 degrees Celsius.

Fire Safety:

Fire exit routes were unobstructed, and a fire assembly point was noted to the side of the premises.

Outing:

Risk assessments were available and reviewed in respect of the recent annual outing from the service to a pet farm.

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)
Two adults were qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and available on the premises during the hours of operation. One staff member held a basic first aid qualification.

(2)(a)
First aid boxes were available in the main corridor and 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 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 7 June 2024.

(b)

A record was available demonstrating the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms on the premises. The firefighting equipment was serviced on the 10 January 2024.

The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced on the 29 May 2024.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the pre-school rooms and in the main reception area.

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 27 March 2025.

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 designated person in charge provided the agency with the information required for the inspection.