

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WH044		
Name of Service:	Woodlawn Montessori & Pre-School		
Address of Service:	Woodlawn House, Clara Road, Kilbeggan, Co. Westmeath		
Eircode:	N91 EV66		
Name of Registered Provider:	Martina Rochford		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	04/05/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	14	PM N/A
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:	K. Murphy		
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

The service is registered as a part time service to accommodate children aged 2 to 6 years of age. The service operates two ECCE sessions between the hours of 09:00 and 12:00 and 12:30 and 15:30 on a Monday to Friday basis. There are no children currently availing of part time provision. The service is operated by an independent provider.

The Early Years' Service is located on a ground floor extension to the home of the registered provider. One large pre-school room is provided. An outdoor play area is attached to the rear of the premises. On-site parking and set down facilities are available. The service is located in a residential area on the outskirts of the town of Kilbeggan, County Westmeath.

Staffing

The registered provider and two staff members were present and working directly with the children during the inspection. All adults held qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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, 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.

(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.

(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 registered provider and a designated person in charge were available in the service.

(b)

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

The registered provider stated that one adult was employed in the service since the last inspection on the 21 September 2021. The file of the new staff member was reviewed, and the following was noted;

(2)(a)

The required number of written validated references were available from past employers in respect of the new staff member.

(b)

Not applicable, written validated references were available from a past employer in respect of the new staff member.

(c)

A Garda Vetting disclosure was available in respect of the new staff member.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as the new staff member 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 member.

(4)

All staff members held a major award at level 5 to level 8 in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications, or a qualification deemed by the Minister to be equivalent.

(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)

No staff member was employed to work 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.

(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)

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

(2)

There were fourteen children attending the service supervised directly by three adults including the registered provider.

(8)(a)

The staff attendance records reviewed indicated that two adults are on the premises at all times.

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 for parents was available and shared with parents via a parent handbook prior to commencement in 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 ensured 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)

Healthy snacks were provided for children by their parents. Children were given time to sit and eat their snack while having conversations with their peers. Water was available to children to self-serve throughout the inspection. Children went to the toilet independently and were assisted where necessary. Staff reminded children to wash their hands after toileting. Children enjoyed free play, tabletop activities and outdoor play during the inspection. Children were encouraged to be independent while dressing for outdoor play and assisted, when necessary, by staff. Children availed of rest opportunities in the designated rest area in the pre-school room. The pre-school room was laid out with low level tables and chairs. Materials were accessible to children on low level wooden shelving and included books, jigsaws, bricks, blocks, dolls, prams, arts and crafts and fine motor skill toys. Children made choices as to what they played with and what activity to participate in. Children's artwork was displayed including a spring theme wall display.

Good teamwork was observed amongst staff. Positive interactions were observed with staff and children. Eye contact was maintained, soft language tones were used and positive praise given to children on the completion of activities. Staff sat with children during tabletop activities. Staff were familiar with children and their personalities. Staff worked in partnership with parents and a verbal handover was observed at collection time. The service communicated with parents via a social media platform and periodic newsletters which depicted the activities and events enjoyed by the children. A learning journal is maintained on each child that includes the children's play and work activities and is shared with the parents at the end of each pre-school term.

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 19 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.

(2) A registered provider-

(a) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that is registered for the first time on or after 30 June 2016, or

(b) of a full day care service, a part-time day care service, a sessional preschool service or a childminding service that moves premises on or after 30 June 2016,

shall ensure that a suitable, safe and secure outdoor space to which the preschool children attending the service have access on a daily basis is provided on the premises.

(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 and adequate play and work equipment were provided indoors and outdoors which included toys and equipment for construction, tabletop activities, arts and crafts and home corners.

(b)

Low level beds were available if required for children over two years of age to sleep. Soft furnishings provided appropriate rest facilities in the pre-school room for any child who wished to avail of rest and relaxation.

(3)(a)

An outdoor play area was available to the rear of the service and accessed directly from the pre-school room. A combined gravel and all-weather surface area was in place. Toys and equipment included a playhouse, benches, balance beams, tyres and an outdoor play kitchen.

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 door to the service was 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.

Infection Control:

The premises were visually clean. All toys and materials were easily cleanable. Warm water, hand paper towels and liquid soap was available in the sanitary accommodation. Children were observed to wash their hands before snacks.

Administration of Medication:

No medication was administered at the time of the inspection. Temperature reducing medication was available in the service if a child presented with a high temperature. A record book was available to record any medicine administered should it be required.

Fire Safety:

Emergency exits were unobstructed from the pre-school room. A fire assembly point was identified to the side of the premises.

Outing:

A risk assessment form and checklist were available for completion in respect of any outings from 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)

Two staff members are qualified in First Aid response (FAR) and two staff members are qualified in Basic First Aid. First Aid response (FAR) qualified staff were rostered to be available on the premises.

(2)(a)

A first aid box was available in an 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 26 April 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 was serviced in November 2022. The smoke alarms were serviced in May 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 27 – Supervision

A registered provider shall ensure that pre-school children attending the service are supervised at all times.

Compliance Information

Children were supervised by the registered provider and staff for the duration of the inspection.

Staff supervised children when attending the bathroom and transitioning for play activities.

At the end of the morning session at 12:00 the staff met the parents/guardians of the children at the entrance door and handed each child over to individual parents and guardians.

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.