

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW154		
Name of Service:	Ashford Montessori School		
Address of Service:	St. Jude's, Ballinahinch, Ashford, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	A67 W635		
Name of Registered Provider:	Patricia Moriarty		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/04/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown Drive, Loughlinstown, County Dublin.		
Inspection undertaken by:	Mona Condon		
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

Ashford Montessori is a privately operated pre-school located in the registered provider's home in the village of Ashford, County Wicklow. The age range of the children currently attending is between 3 and 5 years of age. The registered provider operates the service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday from 9.00am to 12.30pm. There were 11 pre-school children present on the day of inspection. Children have access to an outdoor area which is located at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff employed, one of whom is the registered provider, who provide care and education to the children in the service. All staff members hold a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 the child and safety. 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 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.

(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.

(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 was present, and a named adult was available to deputise if needed.

(b)

The registered provider was on the premises at the time of arrival of the inspector and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.

(2) One new adult was employed since last inspection.

- (a)&(b) Two written and validated past employer references were available for one adult.
- (c) The required Garda vetting disclosure was available in respect one adult employed.
- (d) Not applicable as the new staff member had not been employed outside the state for a period of more than six months as an adult.
- (4)
The four adults employed held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at National Framework for Qualifications.
- (6)(A)
One adult was employed pursuant to the scheme known as 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)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the pre-school service.
- (3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were three adults present with eleven pre-school children on the day of Inspection.

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:

- (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)
- (h) The written details of attendance of each pre-school child were available.
- (i) The staff roster was available and included the names of the staff present on the day of inspection and their hours of work.
- (j) Documentation was available to demonstrate that signed parental consent was required prior to administering medication to a pre-school child.
- (k) Written details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service were available. This was signed by the staff member, manager and the parent of the child.

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

Basic needs of children

The service promoted a healthy eating policy and children's snacks were observed to be nutritious and healthy. Staff were observed sitting with the children during snack time, giving assistance as necessary and encouraging conversation. The children were encouraged to be independent, and they were supported by the staff members to be self-caring, suitable to their age and stage of development including hand washing, toilet use and caring for their belongings. The staff members ensured that each child was appropriately clothed for outdoors activities and the children were observed enjoying freedom of movement both indoors and outdoors on the day of the inspection. A comfortable rest area was available in the room and the children were observed sitting on mats during circle time while engaging in singing and story-time.

Supporting relationships around children:

The staff members were observed being respectful, gentle and kind towards the children in their care. Children's first names were used, appropriate eye contact and gentle voice tones were observed being used during all interactions between the staff and children. Each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings. Transitions observed were explained and notice given prior to a change of activity.

Information was shared with parents and guardians at the drop off and collection times. Face to face meetings can be arranged for parents/guardians as necessary. The service also communicated using alternative means such as the service electronic app, email, texting and phoning.

Physical and material environment:

The pre-school room was bright and spacious and equipped with low level child sized tables and chairs which enabled the children to comfortably sit for tabletop activities and for snack time. The rooms had several interest areas which were equipped with adequate learning materials and play equipment. All toys and equipment used by the children were easily accessible on low level shelving units in both rooms.

Equipment and toys available in the outdoor area at the rear of the premises included ride on equipment, sand and water play with associated props and utensils, a low-level slide and a play-house. All children were observed enjoying outdoor play on the day of the inspection.

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

Infection Control:

- Children were encouraged to wash their hands regularly including before lunch and after using the toilet. Effective hand hygiene practices were observed and in accordance with the services infection control policies and procedures.
- The premises play equipment and materials were in a clean and hygienic condition.
- Foot-operated pedal bins were available in the care room and in the sanitary area.

General Safety:

- The external doors were appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school.
- The designated emergency exit doors were clear and unobstructed.
- Documentary evidence was available that fire drills were being carried out on a monthly basis as per best practice guidelines.
- The kitchen was inaccessible to children.
- The cleaning agents were stored on high shelving and were inaccessible to the pre-school children.
- All toys and equipment were in good, working condition.
- All heavy furniture was secured.

Administration of Medication:

- Medication was not given at the time of the inspection. Written parental consent was available should medication be required to be administered to a child.
- Temperature reducing medication was available and stored safely and staff were aware of how to the safely administer medication.

Outings:

- The registered provider stated that no outings are undertaken from the service at this time.

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 were trained in first aid response (FAR) and were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a)

The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position next to the pre-school room.

(b)

At all times the first aid box was available to the children attending 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 record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded on the 24th of March 2023.

(1)(b) Records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment and smoke alarms dated June 2022 and March 2023 respectively.

(3) Notices were displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire.

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

During the inspection all pre-school children were supervised by the staff members at all times.

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 valid until 27th November 2023. The insurance provides cover for up to 22 children.