

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW182
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Name of Service:	Building Blocks Montessori
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Address of Service:	Presbyterian Church Hall, Dublin Road, Arklow, Co. Wicklow
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Eircode:	Y14 KX31
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Name of Registered Provider:	Susan Whelton
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date(of Inspection:	06/02/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	7	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Loughlinstown Health Centre, Loughlinstown, Co. 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

Building Blocks Montessori is a sessional service which provides care and education to children currently aged between 2 years and 6 months and 5 years of age. The registered provider operates the service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday from 9.30am to 12.30pm.

The service operates from a room adjacent to the church hall which has been adapted for use as a service. A sanitary area, kitchen, storage area and hallway are adjacent to the room. The outdoor area is located at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are four staff employed, one of whom is the Registered Provider. All staff hold a major award in Early Years 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 child and safety. 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

(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.

Compliance Information

(2)

(a)(b) Written and validated past employer references were available in respect of the four adults employed in the service.

(c) Completed Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for four adults employed by the service.

(d) International Police vetting was available for two adults employed who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

The four adults present held major awards in Early Childhood Care and Education at 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) There were four adults present working directly with seven pre-school children on the day of the inspection.

(3) The adult/child ratios were maintained throughout the morning.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-
(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

Twelve files were examined.

In relation to the files examined, the record required in writing in relation to (a)-(i) above was kept for each child.

The children's files were located in a secure place in the service.

(3) (c) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) (a)-(i) was open to inspection on the premises by the inspector.

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

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Basic Needs of Children

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service. The food choices provided by parents for their child were nutritious. Children enjoyed freedom of movement indoors and outdoors with children observed moving freely between both areas. Children's behaviour was managed positively by the staff caring for them and children were praised and encouraged throughout the morning. Children were observed washing their hands before snack, following outdoor play and toilet use.

Supporting Relationships around Children

The atmosphere in the pre-school was happy, relaxed, friendly and child centred. Staff members were respectful and kind towards the children in their care and each child was listened to and given time to chat and express their thoughts and feelings. It was evident by the interactions with the children that the staff knew each child very well. Adults were observed assisting the children when needed. Smooth transitions were observed with notice given by staff regarding a change of activity and children were very settled as a result.

Physical and Material Environment.

The pre-school room was equipped with low level tables and chairs and low-level shelving units with equipment, toys and materials easily accessible to the children. The indoor room was laid out with Montessori equipment, construction toys, art materials and a rest area beside the library. The outdoor area was partly covered and additional equipment including a sand pit, transport toys, mud kitchen were available.

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

Infection Control:

Thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap and paper towels were readily available for hygienic hand washing and drying. The staff members supervised children's handwashing and handwashing routines were well established. Foot pedal operated bins were provided for the disposal of used tissues. Written cleaning schedules were on display for the room environment and sanitary area which were observed to be maintained in a clean and hygienic condition.

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. The staff members were familiar with required safe practice when administering medication in the service. Medicine was safely stored.

Fire Safety:

Fire exits were unobstructed.

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 trained in First Aid Response was present and immediately available to the pre-school children.
- (2)
- (a) The first aid box for children was safely stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in 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 1st of February 2024.
- (b) Records were available detailing the number, type and maintenance of fire- fighting equipment and smoke alarms both dated March 2023.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire was displayed in a conspicuous position in the premises.