

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2015WW241

Name of Service: St. Gerard's Montessori School

Address of Service: Thornhill Road, Bray, Co. Wicklow

Eircode: A98 R242

Name of Registered Provider: Louise O'Reilly

Service type: Full Day

Date of Inspection: 12/12/2023

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|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|-----|
| No of pre-school children: | AM | 18 | PM | N/A |
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| Address of the Early Years Inspectorate: | Tusla Child and Family Agency First Floor Trinity Building IDA Business Park Southern Cross Road Bray Co. Wicklow |
| Inspection undertaken by: | H. Bourke |
| 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

St. Gerard's Montessori was first opened in 1995. The service is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age, on a sessional, parttime and full-time basis. The hours of operation are from 08.30am to 02.30pm Monday to Friday and the service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme for 38 weeks of the year.

The service operates from a purpose-built classroom located in St. Gerard's private primary school. There is a small secure outdoor area to the front of the classroom and in addition, the children have access to a large, secure playing field located on the grounds of the school.

Staffing

There are two full time members of staff working in the Montessori, this includes the registered provider. There are two additional relief staff members who work in the service as required.

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, second staff member 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.

(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

A total of four staff are work in the pre-school service, these files were reviewed.

(1)(a)

The registered provider was present on the day of inspection and a named person was able to deputise as required.

(b)

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

(2)(a)(b)

Written validated references were available in respect of four adults.

(c)

Completed Garda Vetting Disclosures were available for four adults employed.

(d)

International police vetting was available for three adults who had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than six consecutive months as an adult.

(4)

Four members of staff held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Framework of Qualifications or had a qualification deemed equivalent.

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)

Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the Montessori service.

(2)

There were two adults employed and present with 18 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(a)

There were two adults present on the premises throughout the inspection and the staff roster confirmed there were two adults present at all times.

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.*

(5) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (2) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child attends the service.

Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

The registered provider ensured that a record in writing of the above list of particulars, was kept in respect of each child attending the pre-school service.

(3)(c)

The registered provider ensured that these records were available for inspection to an authorised person.

(5)

The registered provider had evidence that all children's records were kept for a period of 2 years from the time a child started at the Montessori.

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-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Children were given the opportunity for free play during the morning, and children's participation was encouraged in all activities throughout the day.

The transition between one activity and the next was smooth and unhurried, aided by the language used by the adults to the children. Positive reinforcement of children's behaviour contributed to a pleasant environment for the children in the service. One to one attention was given to a child if it was required.

The snack time was relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children, all children sat on low level chairs at a table, and conversation was encouraged.

Children were addressed by their name and were given plenty of time to eat their food. All food was provided by the service. Hot meals were delivered to the Montessori for the children who were staying for the full day. Special dietary needs were also accommodated for any child that required it.

All children where over three years of age attending the Montessori but were still offered the opportunity to sleep if it was required. The service had a cosy area with rugs and chairs for children to use should they require it during their day.

Childrens parents are spoken to on an individual basis at collection time. Parents are encouraged to make direct contact with the service, should they have any concerns or issues.

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

The registered provider provides all snacks for the children in the service and children. Parents can request a daily hot meal for their child, which is delivered from the school. The snacks and hot meals provided were in line with the Healthy Eating Policy of the Montessori. Milk or water were serviced with food.

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)
A staff member trained in FAR first aid for children was available at all times to the children attending the Montessori service.

(2)(a)
A well-equipped first aid box was easily accessible and in a conspicuous position in the Montessori room.

(b)
The first aid box was always available to the children attending the 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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (c) an authorised person.
- (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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the premises and the last fire drill took place on the 15th of November 2023.

(b)

There was a maintenance record available for the firefighting equipment dated 14th of July 2023 and smoke alarms dated 6th December 2023.

(2)(c)

The records referred to in paragraph (1) were open to inspection by an authorised person.

(4)

A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire were clearly displayed in the Montessori room.

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

The registered provider demonstrated that the children attending the Montessori service had adequate supervision throughout the operation hours of the pre-school.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

A registered provider shall ensure that the pre-school service is adequately insured.

Compliance Information

The registered provider demonstrated that the Montessori service had adequate insurance to cover the children attending the service and the policy expires on the 27/03/2024