

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2015WW257		
Name of Service:	Blath na hOige Montessori		
Address of Service:	St. Kevin's Community Centre, Blessington, Co. Wicklow		
Eircode:	W91 A524		
Name of Registered Provider:	Sheena Armstrong		
Service type:	Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	19/09/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM N/A
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
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Description of service

This pre-school service was first established in 2003. The service operates from two preschool rooms, on the upper floor of a local community centre located in the urban setting of Blessington in Co. Wicklow. It is registered to provide care and education for children aged between two years and six years of age. The service operates a sessional ECCE service for 38 weeks of the year Monday to Friday. The start times of the service have been staggered since the Covid 19 pandemic. The junior ECCE room starts at 9.00 am to 12.00 pm and the senior ECCE room starts at 09.15 am to 12.15 pm. There were 39 children present on the day of inspection.

Staffing

There are five staff members employed in the service and this includes the registered provider. All five members of staff were present in the service on the day of inspection.

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, deputy, 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.

(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)

There was a person in charge of the service and there was a named staff member who was able to deputise as required.

(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.

(c)

There was a clear management structure in the service on the day of inspection.

(2)(a)(b)

Two written validated references were available in respect of five adults.

(c)

The required Garda vetting disclosures were available in respect of five adults.

(d)

Police vetting was not required as no adult had lived outside the State for a period of longer than six consecutive months since turning eighteen years of age.

(4)
All adults working directly with the children attending the Montessori service held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 or higher on the National Qualifications Framework.

(6)(a)
Not applicable as no staff member had a signed a retirement declaration.

(6)(A)
Two staff members were employed pursuant to the scheme known at 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.

(8) Without prejudice to paragraphs (2) to (7)-

(c) a registered provider of a sessional pre-school service shall ensure that, where the person in charge operates the service single-handedly, a second person familiar with the operation of the service and in a position to provide assistance to the person in charge in operating the service is, at all times, within close distance of the service and available to attend the service to assist the person in charge in the event of an emergency.

Compliance Information

(1)
Throughout the inspection there were an adequate number of adults working directly with the children attending the Montessori.

(3)
The correct adult/child ratio was maintained at all times. There were five adults employed and present with 39 children on the day of inspection.

(8)(c)

Not applicable as there were two adults on the premises at all times and the service is not operated single-handedly.

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)(c)(d)(e)(f)(h) and(i)

A record in writing of the above list of particulars was kept in respect of each child attending the Montessori.

(3)(c)

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

Non-Compliance Information

(1)(b)

Of the ten children's files that were reviewed on the day of inspection, it was found that seven of them did not have the date on which the child first attended the service completed on the admissions form.

(g)

Of the ten children's files that were reviewed on the day of inspection, it was found that five did not have the phone number of the child's registered medical practitioner completed on the admissions form.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1)(b)(g)

All registration forms have been reviewed and finalised. All missing information had been obtained and recorded. Moving forward all new registration forms received will be checked to ensure that they are fully completed. They will be reviewed by two staff members.

Supporting documentation submitted

(1)(b)(g)

Photographic evidence of completed sections on registration forms were submitted.

Summary Comment

(1)(b)(g)

The non-compliances found in relation to Regulation 15 – Record of pre-school child, have been addressed and will be reviewed on the next inspection.

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-

(c) an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(c)

A copy of the Act and the Regulations were on the premises and open to inspection by an authorised person.

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

(1)(b)

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Children were asked what activity they wished to pursue, and children's participation was encouraged in all activities throughout the morning. 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, with minor problems handled promptly. 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 as adults engaged with them helping when required. Children were addressed by their name and were given plenty of time to eat their food. All food was provided by the parents of the children and reflected the healthy eating policy of the service. Snacks provided consisted of sandwiches with healthy fillings, fresh fruit pieces, all of which were cut into small pieces for safety, yogurts, cheese and crackers and all children had beakers filled with water to drink.

Children were supported to use the toilet independently, were supervised appropriately and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards.

Children had access to the outdoor play on a daily basis and wore appropriate clothing when outside.

Children's parents were spoken to directly at the end of the morning to discuss how their child was during the session and any issues that might have arisen.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 24 - Checking in and out and record of attendance

(1) A registered provider shall ensure that each pre-school child attending the service is checked in and out of the service by an employee or an unpaid worker.

(3) A registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) no person other than-

(i) pre-school child attending the service,

(ii) a person dropping or collecting such a child,

(iii) an employee, or

(iv) an unpaid worker, can enter the premises without his or her entry being approved by an employee, and

(b) a daily record in writing is kept of the entry on the premises of any such person.

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (3)(b) is retained for a period of one year from the date to which it relates.

Compliance Information

(1)

A record was available that all children attending the service were checked in and out on a daily basis. All children had been checked in on the register, on the day of inspection when the inspector arrived at the Montessori.

(3)(a) (i)-(iv)

The registered provider ensured that no other person other than the approved list of persons could enter the pre-school premises, without advanced approval.

(b)

There was a sign in sheet available, to record any visitor to the Montessori.

(4)

The registered provider of the service was able to demonstrate that the required records were kept for a period of one year from the date to which they related.

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 FAR first aid for children was present and immediately available to the children.

(2)(a)

A first aid box for children was stored in an accessible and conspicuous position in both Montessori rooms.

(b)

At all times the first aid boxes were available to the children attending the Montessori.

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)

A record in writing was kept of all fire drills that took place in the premises. The last fire drill was recorded in July 2023.

(b)

There were records available detailing the maintenance of the smoke/fire alarm system and firefighting equipment in the service dated the 10th of July 2023 and October 2022 respectively.

(2)(c)

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

(4)

Notices were displayed detailing the procedures to be followed in the event of fire in both Montessori rooms and in the hall area between the rooms.

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 ensured that the adult/child ratios were such that the children attending the Montessori were adequately supervised at all times.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had adequate insurance for the Montessori service.