

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016CC008
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Name of Service:	The Village Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Skehard Road, Blackrock, Co. Cork
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Eircode:	T12 C6KR
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eithne Mccoy
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	21/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Administration Building St Mary's Health Campus Gurrabraher Cork T23X440
Inspection undertaken by:	V. McCarthy
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	N/A
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Description of service

The Village Montessori School is a privately operated sessional and part time service that also caters for children attending the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE). The service provides morning and afternoon sessions to children aged between 2 and 6 years. The Village Montessori School is carried out on the ground floor of a 2-storey building that was purposely built as a childcare facility and is situated in the Blackrock suburban area of Cork. There are 4 care rooms, namely Room 1, Room 2, Room 3 and Room 4. There are residential dwellings on the first floor of the building. There is a secured outdoor play area provided to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

There are 10 adults including the registered provider attached to the service and all work directly with the early years children. Each of the adults has a Quality and Qualifications Ireland (QQI) 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 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*

(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) The service had a named person in charge who was the registered provider and a deputy that could deputise as required.

(b) The registered provider was on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on duty for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

(a) There were 13 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 10 adults.

(b) There were 7 references and required validations from sources other than past employers.

(c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the 10 adults.

(d) Police vetting was available in respect of 2 adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for more than 6 months.

(4)

A copy of a childcare qualification as listed on the National Qualifications Framework was available on file in respect of each of the 10 adults.

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 registered provider ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 10 adults on the premises of which 9 were working across the four care rooms with 67 early years children present. The registered provider was office based as well as assisting in the care rooms.

(8)(a) The staff rotas indicated that at least 2 adults were always on the premises during the hours of operation. On the day of the inspection, there were 10 adults on duty at 8am and the roster demonstrated that 5 of the adults would be on the premises at 3.30pm when the service closed.

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;

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

The registered provider ensured that the name, position, qualifications, and experience of each adult attached to the service were available on file. The inspector noted that a curriculum vitae, proof of identity and qualification records in respect of each adult were available for review and were maintained in a neat and organised way on file.

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)

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT

- The service operated from the ground floor of the detached premises which was maintained in good condition. There were 4 care rooms altogether and each room was decorated and set up in a visually pleasing way for the children that were in attendance. The walls were decorated with art and craftworks carried out by the children of planets, solar systems, continents, flags, shapes, colours, trees and winter scenes.
- Each of the 4 care rooms was warm, comfortable, and furnished with child sized tables, chairs, a reading area, comfortable rest area, low shelving and a variety of wooden play materials and play equipment that met the needs of the children.

- All play materials, play equipment and arts and crafts materials were clearly laid out on the low shelving or stored in containers so that they were easily visible and accessible to the children.
- The main wide thorough way at the premises was set up like a town hall area that facilitated an alternative play area that could be used by the children for activities if the weather did not permit outdoor play. This large, bright area was furnished with wooden storage units for the children's bags, coat stands for the children's coats, a bench area for children's use, walled blackboard areas, playhouses, dolls houses, storage units with toys and games and a library area.
- The secured outdoor play environment situated to the rear of the premises was set up to support the children's free play, imagination, and movement. A section was furnished with roof cover. There were wooden play kitchens, hula hoops, picnic table with attached seating, soft cushions, bug hotels, balls and a selection of ride on play equipment.

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

- All the food eaten by the children for their daily snack and meal was provided by the children's respective parents or guardians.
- On the day of inspection, the children's mid-morning snacks consisted of either sliced fruit, chopped vegetables, crackers, cheese and water to drink.
- The children that were attending part time service had a second meal break and on the day of the inspection ate either a cheese or ham sandwich which again were provided by the children's respective parents or guardians. It was noted that the registered provider had purchased a fridge for each of the 4 care rooms since the previous inspection and the adults stored all the children's perishable food in the fridges.
- A jug of water and cups were stored on a countertop in each care room and the children's individual water bottles were always available to the children as they wanted them.
- Crockery was available in each care room for the children's use as they ate food at their snack/meal breaks.

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 leading into the premises was kept secured to prevent the unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The outdoor play area was secured by high walls, hedging and secured gates.
- The doors leading into the kitchen/staff room, office and storeroom were kept secured and were not accessible to the children. The keys to these doors were stored on high hooks out of children's reach.
- The cleaning agents in each care room were stored on high windowsills out of children's reach.
- All leads and flexes were kept out of children's reach.
- Low level glass panels throughout the premises were fitted with visibility strips.
- All windows were fitted with window restrictors.

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)
The service provided evidence that 1 adult that had training in first aid response (FAR) and was always on the premises. It was acknowledged that a further 6 adults had up to date training in paediatric first aid.
- (2)
(a) There was a fully equipped first aid bag on the premises. It was stored out of children's reach in a press in the secured kitchen.
- (b) The first aid bag was always available on the premises.

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) Records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service were available on file. The last fire drill was carried out on 19 October 2023.
 - (b) Records regarding the number, service and type of fire equipment were maintained on file. The fire equipment was last serviced on 30 August 2023 and the wired smoke alarm had a maintenance service on 16 November 2023.
- (4)
- The fire evacuation procedure for the service which contained details in relation to the procedure to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed on the noticeboard beside the main entrance door.