

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2016CC012

Name of Service: Tir Na nÓg Montessori School

Address of Service: Copperfield House, 6 Clermont, Douglas Road, Co. Cork

Eircode: T12 FK02

Name of Registered Provider: Jennifer O Donovan

Service type: Full Day, Part Time, Sessional

Date of Inspection: 29/09/2023

No of pre-school children:	AM	52	PM	22

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

Description of service

Tír Na nÓg Montessori School is a privately operated service that caters for children aged 2 to 6 years. Tír Na nÓg Montessori School provides sessional service including the Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme (ECCE), part time and full day care service and its opening times are between 8am and 6pm. The premises is a 2-storey house located in a residential area of Douglas that was purposely adapted as a childcare service. There are 3 care rooms namely the Yellow room and Green room which are both located on the ground floor and the Pink room which is located on the first floor. An enclosed outdoor play area is provided at the rear of the premises.

Staffing

On the day of inspection, there were 10 adults on the premises of which 9 were working directly with the children and the person in charge was mainly office based and available to answer the inspector's queries. The registered provider was not service based. There is a total of 13 adults attached to the service.

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 person in charge, 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.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a named person in charge and a named deputy that could deputise as required.
 - (b) The person in charge and deputy were both on duty when the inspector arrived at the premises and remained on the premises for the duration of the inspection.
- (2)
- (a) There were 20 references and required validations available on file from past employers in respect of the 13 adults attached to the service.
 - (b) There were 6 references and required validations on file from sources other than past employers in respect of the adults.
 - (c) A Garda vetting disclosure was available on file in respect of each of the 13 adults.
 - (d) Police vetting was available on file in respect of 5 of these adults that had lived outside the jurisdiction for a period of more than 6 consecutive months.

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 person in charge ensured that there were an adequate number of adults always working directly with the children.

(2) On the day of the inspection there were 9 adults working directly with 52 early years children during the morning session and 8 adults working directly with 18 early years children during the afternoon session. Additionally, the person in charge was office based. The adult child ratio exceeded the minimum requirements.

- There were 17 children in the Green room with 3 adults in attendance.
- There were 17 children in the Yellow room with 3 adults in attendance.
- There were 18 children in the Pink room with 3 adults in attendance.

(8)(a) There were always at least 2 adults on the premises during the hours of operation. The roster demonstrated that there were 10 adults on the premises at 8am and that there would be 3 adults on the premises at 6pm.

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;*
- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) Details of each adult’s name, proof of identity, position, qualification and details of experience were available on file for review by the inspector.
- (h) The service maintained daily sign in and out records regarding each child’s arrival and departure times. Details of the adult’s name that dropped and collected each child were also maintained on separate records.
- (k) There were designated forms for the recording of any accidents, injuries and incidents at the premises. During the inspection, the inspector assessed that there were 19 records regarding incidents and injuries available on file. The records were completed in full and detailed an account of the events, the management of the incidents/injuries, were signed and dated by the adult maintaining the record and each of the records was co-signed by the respective child’s parent/guardian.

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:

- The children's need to use the toilet was promptly and sensitively attended to. The independent use of the toilet by the older children was encouraged and supported as appropriate by the adults.
- The younger children that wore nappies had their nappies changed regularly by the adults.
- Hand hygiene by the children was supported and encouraged by the adults who supervised the children when they washed their hands before eating, after outdoor play and after using the toilet.
- The children's need for rest and relaxation was met as each of the care rooms were provided with a rest area consisting of soft matting and cushions. The children were able to access the rest area as they chose for play, rest, or quiet time.
- The children were provided with a few opportunities daily to play outside and were supported and supervised during their play activities.
- The children were dressed appropriately in coats and hats when they played outdoors.

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 food eaten by the children for their mid-morning and mid-afternoon snacks was provided to the children by the service. Each of the 3-care room had a designated low table that was set up with a selection of sliced fruit and vegetables such as grapes, apples, cucumber and tomatoes, a tray of brown bread, crackers, bread sticks and jugs of milk and water.
- The children visited the table and self-served themselves food and drinks as they chose under the supervision of the adults. A supply of cups, plates and cutlery were available at each of the low tables.
- Any child that was thirsty throughout the day or required additional fluids could easily access a drink as he/she chose from this table.
- All the food eaten by the children for their main meal was supplied and prepared by the children’s respective parents or guardians.
- On the day of inspection, the children’s food for their main meal was either meat, vegetables and potatoes or chicken pasta with vegetables or ham sandwiches.
- All perishable food was stored in a fridge positioned in each of the respective care rooms and an adult reheated the children’s dinner meals on plates by using a microwave that was provided in each of the 3 care rooms. The children ate their food in their respective care room and the adults were noted to sit chatting with them and supervising them as they ate their food.

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 2 front entrance doors leading into the building were each secured and prevented unauthorised access by an adult or the leaving of an unsupervised child.
- The outdoor play area was secured by newly installed high fencing since the previous inspection.
- All leads and flexes attached to stereos in each of the 3 care rooms were kept out of children's reach.
- Visibility strips were fitted to glass doors throughout the premises.
- All light bulbs were provided with protective covers.
- The window blind cords in the care rooms were noted to be safely secured by wall brackets.
- Cleaning agents and equipment were stored on high shelving out of children's reach.
- The stairway was fitted with a child height handrail to assist the children using the upstairs Pink room.
- The adult's personal handbags were stored on high wall hooks out of children's reach.
- The first aid box in each care was wall mounted high out of children's reach.
- The fire extinguishers were anchored on secure storage frames.
- The office which was situated directly off the Pink room was maintained secured to prevent the entry of an unsupervised child.

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 3 adult who were always on the premises had up to date training in first aid response (FAR). It was also noted that an additional 3 adults had recently completed FAR training and were awaiting certification of same.

(2)

(a) There were 3 fully equipped first aid boxes available and 1 was stored in each of the 3 care rooms wall mounted high out of children's reach.

(b) The first aid boxes were 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) There were records of monthly fire drills carried out at the service available on file. Fire drills were last carried out by the service on 20th and 21st September 2023.
 - (b) A record of the number, type and maintenance record of firefighting equipment and smoke alarms was available on file. It was recorded that the fire equipment was serviced during August 2023 and the wired smoke alarm was last serviced on 01 October 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 in each care room throughout the premises.