

# Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

## Pre School

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|--|--|----|-------|
| <b>TUSLA Identifier:</b>   | TU2016DR029  |    |       |
| <b>Name of Service:</b>  | Chestnut Montessori (IMEB)   |    |       |
| <b>Address of Service:</b>   | Ballyroan Community & Youth Centre, Marian Road, Rathfarnham, Dublin<br>14, Co. Dublin   |    |       |
| <b>Eircode:</b>  | D14 R7Y7   |    |       |
| <b>Name of Registered Provider:</b>  | Laura Higgins  |    |       |
| <b>Service type:</b>   | Sessional  |    |       |
| <b>Date of Inspection:</b>   | 22/10/2024   |    |       |
| <b>No of pre-school children:</b>  | AM   | 17 | PM 17 |
| <b>Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:</b>  | 1st floor Trinity Building, IDA Business Park, Southern Cross Road,<br>Bray, Co. Wicklow |    |       |
| <b>Inspection undertaken by:</b>   | Sarah Quigley  |    |       |
| <b>Title:</b>  | Early Years Inspector  |    |       |
| <b>Authority to Inspect</b>  |  |    |       |
| 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). |  |    |       |
| <b>Conditions if applicable</b>  | Not applicable   |    |       |

### Description of service

Chestnut Montessori is a privately owned early years' service, and is one of seven services operated by the registered provider. Care and education are provided on a sessional basis to preschool children aged 2 to 6 years from 9:00 to 12:30 each weekday, on a school calendar basis. The service is located in a residential area of Rathfarnham, South Co. Dublin. The service operates from one purposely adapted care room located within the Ballyronan Community and Youth Centre. An outdoor play area is available to the children and is directly accessible from the care room.

### Staffing

The service currently employs three staff members who were all present on the day of inspection, including the designated person in charge. The registered provider does not work directly in 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/ information and records/ health, welfare and development of child/ safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 and regulation 16.

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

*(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.*

*(3) The procedures specified in paragraph (2) shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the pre-school service.*

*(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

Documentation was reviewed in full in respect of Regulation 9(2)(3)(4) for two adults who had commenced employment in the service since the last date of inspection on the 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021. Regulation 9(2)(c) was reviewed for all three adults employed. The following documents were available;

- (2)
- (a) (b)  
References were available from two sources for both of the adults.
  - (c) Garda vetting disclosures from The National Vetting Bureau were available for the three adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
  - (d) International police vetting was available for both of the adults.
- (3) Documentation reviewed evidenced the procedures specified under Regulation 9(2) had been completed prior to the two adults commencing employment in the service.
- (4) There was evidence that both of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework for 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.*
- (8)*
- (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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the pre-school children attending the service during the inspection.
- (3) The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were seventeen pre-school children attending the service being supervised by three adults during the inspection.
- (8) (c) Not applicable, 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.*

### Compliance Information

(1)(a)-(i)

A sample of documentation was reviewed for 12 children currently enrolled to attend the service by the inspector. The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the details relating to points (a) to (i) of the above regulation for each of the records reviewed.

## 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:*

- (h) details of attendance by each pre-school child on a daily basis;*
- (i) details of staff rosters on a daily basis;*
- (j) details of any medication administered to a pre-school child attending the service with signed parental consent;*
- (k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.*

### Compliance Information

- (1)
- (h) A record was available in the care room detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that attendance records had been maintained daily in the service.
  - (i) An accurate staffing roster was available in the service detailing hours of work for each staff member on the day of inspection. A review of documentation evidenced that staff members attendance had been recorded daily in the service.
  - (j) There were no written records of administration of medication available in the service. The person in charge stated medication had not been administered to a child in recent years and is not typically administered in the service. However, the necessary documentation was available to record the administration of medications if required.
  - (k) Records of accidents and incidents which had occurred in the service were available. The sample reviewed on the day of inspection contained the required information, including record that parents/guardians had been appropriately informed.

### 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 inspector observed that staff were aware of their roles and responsibilities in relation to supporting the health, wellbeing and development of children in the service during the practices observed by the inspector. For example: adults were observed offering praise and encouragement towards the children, prompting individual choices during morning play and Montessori based activities. Adults used respectful language and kind, gentle tones during all interactions which reflected in the calm atmosphere of the service. Adults communicated well with the children, making eye-contact, listening, and speaking individually with the children during the inspection. Staff were each observed to have a supportive role in the children's activities, engaging when invited by a child and using prompts to extend conversations, play, and learning.

The routine in the service was observed to be child-led, and children were visibly engaged and content in their Montessori and play based activities throughout the inspection. Children were all given the opportunity to engage in outdoor play throughout the inspection and were regularly asked if they would like to play outdoors.

The service had a rolling lunch table in place where children could choose when they would like to sit and eat their snacks. Staff created a sociable atmosphere sitting with the children while they ate, engaged in conversation. Independence was encouraged throughout the morning where children participated in tasks such as cleaning up following activities and putting coats on for outdoor play.

The children's behaviour was managed in a calm and positive manner, evidenced by adults encouraging problem solving and using suggestions to resolve conflicts whilst offering positive reinforcement.

### 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

The inspector found by observation of practice, review of documentation, discussion with the registered provider, and inspection of the premises that the following steps to safeguard children attending:

#### General Safety:

The entrance door into the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons gaining access or children exiting unsupervised. The toys and play equipment observed in use by the children on the day of inspection were safe and in good working order. The registered provider had taken measures to ensure the indoor play environment was safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

#### Infection Control:

An infection control policy was in place to inform practice. Pedal-operated, lidded bins were in place throughout the service to appropriately manage waste. Staff supported children to wash their hands at regular intervals including after using the toilet, after outdoor play, and before lunch. Schedules were in place and maintained to ensure the service, equipment and materials are regularly cleaned. Staff members outlined appropriate exclusion periods for adults and children with infectious illnesses were implemented in the service as per the policy.

#### Administration of Medication:

There was written evidence of prior parental consent for the administration of both temperature reducing and prescribed medications, and there were procedures in place to safely administer and document such medication if required, including in the case of an emergency. Staff members detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspector and had appropriate documentation available to record such administration if required.

#### Fire Safety:

The designated fire escape routes were clearly indicated and free from obstruction on the day of inspection. Staff members adequately outlined the evacuation procedures in place in the event of a fire and stated that fire drills are practiced regularly on a monthly basis.

## Part VI - Safety

### Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

### Compliance Information

Documentation reviewed evidenced that the preschool service was adequately insured for the type of service provided and the number of children in attendance.