

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DY011
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Name of Service:	Horizons Montessori School
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Address of Service:	2 Cypress Park, Templeogue, Dublin 6W, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D6W R973
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona O'Kelly
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Service type:	Full Day, Part Time, Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	12/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	67	PM	37
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Floor 7, Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
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Inspection undertaken by:	F Carty, R Brien and S Early O'Brien
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Title:	Early Years Inspectors
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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

Horizons Montessori School is a privately owned service. The service is registered to provide full daycare, part-time and sessional care to preschool children aged 2-6 years. The service operates an Early Childhood Care and Education Scheme on a school calendar basis. The programme of care is facilitated through a blend of a play based and Montessori curriculum. The service is registered to operate from 7.45am to 6.30pm each weekday. Horizons Montessori School is located in an urban area in Templeogue, South County Dublin and operates from a purposely adapted premises on the ground and upper floor of a commercial unit. The service consists of six preschool care rooms. A school aged care service is provided on the premises outside the operating hours of the preschool service. A fully enclosed outdoor play area is available on the premises.

Staffing

The preschool service currently employs seventeen staff members, including the principal of the school, a manager and a domestic staff member. On the day of inspection, fourteen adults were present and working directly with the children. The registered provider does not work 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, health, welfare and development of child and safety. The inspection may also focus on other areas as required.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under the following regulations:

Regulation 9 –Management and recruitment.

Regulation 11 - Staffing Levels.

Regulation 15 – Record of a preschool child.

Regulation 16 – Information and records.

Regulation 23 – Safety

However, on inspection additional non-compliance which posed a risk was identified under Regulation 29. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation 15 and regulation 16. As a result, the scope of the inspection included 16 records of a preschool child, 8 administration of medication forms and 10 accidents and incident forms.

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 inspectors wish 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

(2)

Documentation was assessed under Regulation 9(2)(4) for all seventeen adults currently employed to work in the service. Regulation 9(3) was assessed for seven adults who had commenced employment in the service following the last date of inspection on the 13th December 2021. The following records were available:

(a)(b)

Of the thirty four references that were required, twenty eight were available from a past employer and six were available from a reputable source.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for all adults. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years for fourteen adults.

(d)

International Police vetting was available for four adults who had lived outside the State for a period exceeding six months as an adult.

(3)
The procedures specified in paragraph (2) were completed prior to one staff members commencing in the service.

(4) There was evidence that sixteen of the adults had attained at least a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Framework for Qualifications, or a qualification deemed to be equivalent

Non-Compliance Information

- (3)
- Seven references for three adults were not verified prior to the adults commencing work in the service.
 - Garda vetting disclosures for three adults had not been sought prior to them working with the children.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

Going forward we will ensure all staff members are reference checked prior to commencement of employment.

We will ensure updated Garda vetting dates are noted on calendar dashboard.

Supporting documentation submitted

Photos of Garda vetting applications submitted for the staff who required it.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 9.

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) An adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at all times during the inspection.
- (2) The minimum ratio of adults to children for full day care services was adhered to at all times during the inspection. There were sixty seven children attending the service being supervised by fourteen adults on the day of inspection.
- (8)(a) There were at least two adults on the premises 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.*

Compliance Information

(1)
A sample of sixteen records of preschool children maintained in the service were reviewed by the inspectors to assess compliance. The documentation reviewed evidenced that thirteen of the records detailed all of the required information outlined under Regulation 15(1) (a) to (i).

Non-Compliance Information

- (b) Two of the records did not contain the date in which the child started.
- (h) There were no immunisation records available for one child.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

- (b) Start and finish date have now been added to our registration form.
- (h) Parent declaration is stated on our registration form if parent is unable to obtain proof of vaccinations.

Supporting documentation submitted

Copies of new form attached.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 15.

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 written record was available in the care rooms detailing the attendance of each preschool child on the day of inspection.
- (i) Details of a staffing roster was available in the service and accurately reflected the staff in attendance on the day of inspection.
- (j) Records of the administration of medication available in the service and a sample reviewed on the day of inspections detailed signed parental consent.
- (k) Written records of accidents and incidents which occurred in the service were available on the day of inspection. A sample reviewed documented necessary details.

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 inspectors observed appropriate care practices in place in the service during the inspection.

Staff reported that the morning snack is provided daily by the parents or guardians of the children in attendance.

The service provided a hot meal and afternoon snack to the children. Children's drinks were available to them in the care rooms at all times. Staff members assisted the children during meal times which was observed to be a relaxed and sociable atmosphere. Additional food was available to those who requested it when the hot meal was served.

The play experiences in the service were observed to be child-led. In the morning the children engaged in activities from the Montessori method of education. Staff were observed supporting the children's learning, sitting and engaging with the children and using prompts to extend play experiences. The children all played outdoors during the inspection. Children all accessed the toilet independently during the inspection and staff supported younger children where required. Staff demonstrated kindness and warmth during interactions observed by the inspectors. Comfort was offered to children promptly when required and the children appeared happy and content throughout the inspection. Staff were observed to use encouragement, gentle tones and praise when promoting positive behaviour in line with the service's behaviour management policy. Staff provided an appropriate level of supervision whilst supporting the children's independence during play and mealtimes. Staff supported the children to wash their hands and clean their faces at appropriate times throughout the inspection. Rest areas were available in the care rooms so children could take time away from the group or rest if required.

Staff described how they record information about each child's day on paper and communicate this to parents at collection.

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

General Safety:

The entrance door to the service was adequately secured to ensure the safety of the children within and to avoid unauthorised persons accessing the service 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 and outdoor play environments were safe and free from hazards. Cleaning products, medications, and hazardous materials were stored securely out of reach of the children.

Infection Control:

The pre-school rooms and adjoining sanitary facilities were in a clean condition. Up to date cleaning schedules outlining appropriate cleaning methods and the various areas to be cleaned within the playrooms and sanitary accommodation were available. Staff members were observed sweeping the floors and cleaning the tables after meals and messy play. The wash hand basins were equipped with liquid soap and warm water to support effective handwashing.

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 adequately detailed the procedures for administering medication when required during discussions with the inspectors. Documentation was available to record such administration if required, a sample of this documentation was reviewed by the inspectors and was appropriate.

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.

Non-Compliance Information

Infection Control:

1. In the Montessori 4 room children did not wash their hands before snack. They were observed to use hand sanitiser however, washing hands with warm water and soap is deemed most effective for infection control.
2. Staff were observed handing the children paper towels which were not stored in a dispenser. This poses a risk of cross contamination.

Administration of Medication:

3. Emergency medication was available for a child who needed it however, it was not stored in it's original packaging with the prescribed information. This is at variance with the service policy.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

Infection Control:

1. A staff meeting to update staff happened immediately and our hand washing policy was again stated to all staff.
2. Paper towel was immediately placed in a dispenser.

Administration of Medication:

3. Emergency medication was placed in original packaging by parent.

Supporting documentation submitted

Infection Control:

1. No supporting documents submitted.
2. A photo of paper towels in the dispenser.

Administration of Medication:

3. A photo of the medication in original packaging.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 23.

Part VII - Premises and Space Requirements

Regulation 29 - Premises

A registered provider shall ensure that the premises of the service are-

- (d) cleaned, maintained and repaired, as required, and*
- (e) equipped with adequate and suitable sanitary facilities.*

Non-Compliance Information

- (d)
- The service was not maintained as required as detailed below:
- On the first floor hallway a piece of skirting board was missing. Loose materials were observed in the gap between the floor covering and the wall which was accessible to children.
 - A loose tile was observed in the ground floor sanitary area of the service.

(e)

There are 71 children in attendance on the busiest day. There are 6 toilets and 5 sinks available to the children. One toilet and sink are required for every eleven children attending the service.

This was found non-compliant on the last inspection dated 13th December 2021. The corrective and preventive actions submitted by the registered provider did not address the non-compliance from re-occurring.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(d) Skirting board and loose tile were replaced and made safe.

(e) Contractor was contacted to view bathroom and quote for additional basin and toilet unit , appointment date 8/1/2025.

Supporting documentation submitted

(d) A photo of the repaired skirting boards was submitted.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions together with the supporting documents were reviewed by the inspector and are deemed to meet the requirements of Regulation 29.