

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DY027
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Name of Service:	Buzzy Bees Montessori School
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Address of Service:	Clontarf Parish Centre, Seafield Road West, Clontarf, Dublin 3
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Name of Registered Provider:	Helen Keegan
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	10/06/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	39	PM	20
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Floor 7 Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, St. John's Road West, Kilmainham, Dublin 8
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Finnegan Hayes
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

Buzzy Bees Montessori School is a privately owned service which operates from two rooms on the ground floor of a parish centre in North Dublin. The service is registered to provide part-time care and education to children aged 2-5years from 8:45am-1pm Monday to Friday. The operates 38 weeks per year in line with the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme. An enclosed outdoor area is available on the ground of the parish centre.

Staffing

The registered provider employs six staff to work directly with the children in the service and works in the service herself. An additional adult is employed externally to work directly with a child who requires additional support. Six adults were present on the day of inspection. The registered provider arrived at 1pm to meet with the inspector.

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.

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, 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*
- (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.

Compliance Information

- (1)
- (a) The service had a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise if required.
 - (b) Discussion with staff and a review of the staff attendance book showed that a named person in charge is present on the premises for the duration of the opening hours.
 - (c) There was a clear management structure in the service and staff were aware of their own role and responsibilities.
- (2) Discussion with management and a review of the roster showed that eight staff are currently employed to work directly with the children in the service including the registered provider. The files of these staff were reviewed in full along with garda vetting disclosures for three adults who were present on the day of inspection providing extracurricular activities for the children.
- (a) (b) Sixteen written and verified references were available in relation to 8 staff members.
 - (c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all eight staff employed in the service and three adults who provided activities for the children on the day of inspection. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.
 - (d) There was no evidence to show that any of the eight staff required Police vetting.
- (4) Evidence was available to show that nine staff members who worked directly with the children held 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.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) There were 39 preschool children being cared for by six adults on the morning of inspection.

(2) Ratios were maintained during the inspection. The following was observed;

- In Vernan hall four staff were caring for 19 children aged 3-5 years old.
- In the Seafield room two staff were caring for 20 children aged 3-5 years old.

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)

Basic Needs:

- A warm and welcoming atmosphere was evident in the service on arrival. Throughout the service children and staff were observed to be engaged in a range of activities in the care rooms.
- Food which is eaten in the service is provided daily by the parents. Children were observed to have a small snack from their lunchbox at approximately 10am followed by a longer lunch time later on in the day. Children were given ample time for meals and were not hurried.

- Water was observed to be readily available and accessible to the children in all care rooms on a low-level shelf.
- Children were observed to move freely in the care room for example following mealtimes children were free to leave the table and play.

Physical and Material environment:

- Furniture was sized appropriately for the children in each care room allowing them to access materials and equipment independently and comfortably engage in mealtimes and tabletop activities.
- An enclosed outdoor area was available to the side of the premises providing opportunities for gross motor play.

Supporting Relationships around Children:

- Staff were observed to engage positively with the children using warm and gentle tones when addressing them and to engage in the daily activities supporting the children's learning and development.
- Staff were aware of the individual developmental needs of the children attending the service.
- A range of extracurricular activities are provided in the service supporting the children to engage in physical activity and build confidence.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) (a)

1. Toys and equipment were not grouped into defined interest areas in Vernan hall and additional toys and equipment were required to support a variety of spontaneous play experiences for example a small folding kitchen was available on the shelf however it was not obvious what this was on first view and children did not have access to any dress up costumes for imaginative play. A range of play equipment which is readily available in clearly defined areas encourages and supports children to make choices and engage in a range of play experiences. It is acknowledged that all toys and equipment must be cleared away each day and the room left empty for use by other groups.
2. The behaviour management practice used by staff were not observed to be supportive of the individual needs of the children or in line with the behaviour management policy for example two children were arguing over some toys. The staff member who intervened gave the toys to one child and did not provide adequate support to the other child to understand what was happening. The child was then observed wandering aimlessly around the room for a short period.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

1. The service has grouped toys into areas and taken the toy kitchen off the shelf and put it on a table so the children can access it. The service has a basket of accessories to go with it i.e. pots, pans, empty cartons, play fruit and veg. The registered provider will make sure they are out each day for the children to play with.
2. This was addressed at a staff meeting. Staff were reminded of the need to support all children when upset. The registered provider has offered to provide training if required.

Supporting documentation submitted

Meeting minutes were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 19.

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 service entrance was secure to prevent unauthorised persons entering the service. Staff attended the door to allow access to visitors and glass panels allowed staff to see visitors before opening the door. A button release was fitted to the wall inside the door at adult height to prevent children leaving the service unsupervised.
- Toys and equipment were well maintained and free from hazards.

Infection Control:

- Thermostatically controlled warm water and dispensed soap were available to support adequate hand hygiene. Children were observed to wash their hands frequently throughout the day after using the toilet and before mealtimes.
- Food which is brought from home and eaten in the service was refrigerated to prevent spoiling of perishable items.
- Pedal operated lidded bins were used throughout the service for disposal of contaminated items.
- Tables were cleaned with antibacterial spray before and after mealtimes.

Administration of Medication:

- A detailed health care plan was available for one child with a medical condition and staff were aware of the signs and symptoms to watch for and the procedure to be followed in the event of a medical event occurring.

Fire Safety:

- Fire exits were unobstructed throughout the day.
- Staff were knowledgeable of procedure to be followed in the event of a fire emergency.
- Notices detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed in both care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A child was observed to have whole grapes for lunch which posed a choking hazard. The service healthy eating policy does not identify potential choking hazards which should not be included in the children's lunches.

Infection Control:

2. Paper handtowels were not hygienically dispensed in the sanitary areas and were observed in a basket behind the sink which posed a risk of cross contamination.

Administration of Medication:

3. Medication held in the service for one child was observed to have expired. It is acknowledged that the child has never required the medication to be administered in the service. This posed a risk of injury to the child should the medication be administered in the event of an emergency.

Fire Safety:

4. A review of the fire drill records showed that fire drills were not completed during March and April 2024 which posed a potential risk to the children in the case of a fire evacuation. Monthly fire drills are required to ensure children are prepared for an evacuation in an emergency situation.
5. Attendance records did not adequately reflect the times of arrival and departure of the children which may pose a risk in the event of a fire emergency. The arrival time of only one child was recorded in the roll book for each room followed by a double line symbol indicating the arrival of all other children. The time of departure of a child who was observed leaving the service at 12pm was not recorded until 12:20pm when another group of children had left the service. Attendance records which detail the time of arrival and departure of each child are required to be completed in a timely manner to ensure the safe evacuation of all children in the event of a fire emergency.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. Parents were texted about cutting up fruit and vegetables and this was added to the policy and procedures. The registered provider will send reminders to all parents, especially to all new parents starting in September. Monthly reminders will be sent to parents over group text.

Infection Control:

2. The service ordered tissue dispensers to put the tissues in each bathroom. Staff will make sure the tissues are put in the dispenser when the service reopens in September.

Administration of Medication:

3. New medication was obtained for the child. Management will keep a note of all dates of any new medication from September and ask parents to replenish once out of date.

Fire Safety:

4. Fire drills were talked about in staff meeting and the importance of them to be done each month. The service have scheduled time to complete the drills monthly going forward. The registered provider will remind teachers towards the end of each month.
5. At a staff meeting it was decided to only have one attendance book for each class. The staff will date and have a time written down for each child. The registered provider will make sure to keep a note of the teachers doing this. The registered provider will review this process at the end of September to make sure it is working.

Supporting documentation submitted

Policy and procedure document, Meeting minutes and an image of the dispensers purchased were reviewed.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider are sufficient to address the non-compliance under Regulation 23.

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

(2) (a)(b) The registered provider ensured that a suitably equipped first aid box was available for use in the premises. This was stored in a cupboard out of reach of the children but accessible as needed.

Non-Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider did not ensure that a person trained in First Aid Response was available at all times to the children in the service. A review of FAR certification showed that one staff member held up to date FAR certification however this person was not present on the day of inspection. This posed a risk that a child may not receive adequate intervention in the event of a medical emergency. It is acknowledged that one staff member who was present on the day held paediatric first aid.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective and Preventive Action

(1) Two more staff members will complete FAR training to ensure cover for absences or sick leave. The deputy manager is scheduled to complete the course prior to the service reopening in September. Management will make sure all certificates are in date and that the service always have enough cover.

Supporting documentation submitted

No evidence provided.

Summary Comment

The corrective and preventive actions proposed by the registered provider will address the outstanding non-compliance identified under Regulation 25 once the course is completed by September.

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) The registered provider ensured that the following records were maintained;
- (a) A record of monthly fire drills showed that the last fire drill had taken place on 31st May 2024.
 - (b) A record of servicing and maintenance for the firefighting equipment and smoke alarms showed that the firefighting equipment was last serviced on 15th February 2024 while the smoke alarms were last serviced on 24th January 2024.
- (4) Notices detailing the steps to take in the event of a fire were displayed throughout the service; in communal areas and care rooms.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider ensured that the service was adequately ensured for the type of service provided and number of children attending the service. The insurance certificate reviewed showed the insurance is in place up to 27th March 2025.