

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016DY032
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Name of Service:	Willow House Montessori
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Address of Service:	The Mageough Hall, Cowper Road, Rathmines, Dublin 6, Co. Dublin
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Eircode:	D06 Y9H2
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Name of Registered Provider:	Hilary Garvey
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	14/12/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	15	PM	14
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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 D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Griffin and E. Finnegan Hayes
Title:	Early Years Inspectors

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

Willow House Montessori is a part time service located in Dublin 6. The service is open from Monday to Friday between 8:30am-1pm providing care to 2- to 6-year-old children. The premises is a single storey building located in the grounds of a residential complex for older persons. The service operates from one main care room. The outdoor play area is located to the front of the building. The service participates in the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) programme.

Staffing

There were three adults present on the day of inspection and all were working directly with the children. It is acknowledged the registered provider visited on the day of inspection but was not working directly with the children.

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 following Regulations were inspected:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under:

Regulation 16(1)(h)(k) Records relating to the preschool service,

Regulation 19(1)(a) Health, Welfare and Development of child,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding the health, Welfare and Development of child,

Regulation 32 Complaints

As a result, the scope of the inspection included the Montessori room and the outdoor play area.

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.

Additional Information

This inspection was triggered by information received to the inspectorate.

Acknowledgments

The inspectors wish 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-

- (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) (b) There was a designated person in charge and two named persons to deputise when required. The person in charge was on the premises when the inspectors arrived unannounced and was present for the duration of the inspection.

(c) Discussion with staff and management showed a clear management structure and roles and responsibilities within the service.

(2) The files of four staff including the registered provider were reviewed on the day of the inspection.

(c) Garda vetting was available for four staff members.

(d) Police vetting from three countries was available in respect of the three staff members who had lived outside the jurisdiction for longer than six months as an adult.

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) The registered provider ensured there was an adequate number of adults working directly with children at all times.

(2) The minimum ratio of staff members caring for children was maintained on the day of inspection. The following ratios were observed:

- There were fifteen preschool children being cared for by three adults at 9.52am on the morning of inspection.
- There were fourteen preschool children being cared for by three adults at 12.01pm during the afternoon of inspection.

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;

(k) details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

(3) A record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection on the premises, and the documents and records referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall be open to inspection whether on the premises or elsewhere, by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

(1)(h) The service maintained an attendance book detailing the time of arrival and departure of each child.

(k) The service, maintained documentation detailing accidents, injuries or incidents involving children attending the service. A sample of 12 were reviewed and contained all the necessary information.

(3) A written record of details outlined in regulation 16 1(h)(k) were available and provided to the inspector for review.

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:

- Children bring a lunch from home which was eaten at 11am in the morning. From discussion with staff children are offered toast at breakfast time. The children were observed to eat healthy snacks such as crackers, wraps, yoghurts, fruit, and vegetables. All fruit and vegetables were observed to be sliced up in small pieces to prevent choking and keeping in line with the service healthy eating policy.
- Water was available to the children in the care room throughout the day. There was a water dispenser jug available at low level for the children to access when needed.
- Independence was supported throughout the service for example children were free to move about the room and choose activities. For example, during circle time two children were observed to leave the group and to do other activities.
- Identity and belonging were promoted throughout the service. For example, children had their own individually labelled cubby hole to store their belongings.

Supporting Relationships:

- Daily observations and monthly reports are recorded and are shared with parents/guardians. Information is shared via the information board inside the door, text message, email, and an informal chat at the door. Staff discussed sharing other information about the child's form on the day, any incidents that arose or activities that the child engaged in.

- Staff were able to discuss how settling in was made as smooth as possible within the service. Staff talked about how they support children to integrate and settle into the service by offering a settling in period with reduced hours to ensure a smooth transition from the home to the service. This was evidenced by a child going home early on the day of inspection.
- Room leaders were observed to take charge of the room and support children to complete tasks as required. This ensured the structure of the day was maintained and the needs of the children were met in a timely manner.

Physical and Material environment:

- The furniture provided in the rooms was low level and suitable to the needs of the children. For example, there were low level tables and chairs. In addition, equipment was visible and accessible enabling the children to independently access their choice of activity.
- Toys and equipment were organised into defined areas of interest in the care room with a variety of supporting Montessori equipment available in each area. This variety of equipment allowed the children to engage in a range of learning experiences. For example, practical life, language, sensorial and mathematics experience.
- Staff managed and supported transitions in the service, for example, staff were observed to ring a bell to provide advance notice to the children when activities were coming to an end. Staff were observed to assist children to tidy up in preparation for the next activity.
- Children's language development was supported through one to one and group discussions, songs, and storytelling, which were observed during the inspection.

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 entrance door leading into the premises was appropriately secured to prevent the children from exiting unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the premises.
- The external outdoor play area was securely gated reducing the risk of unauthorised access. Children who were brought out to the outdoor areas from indoors were observed to be supervised at all times during outdoor play time.
- The attendance book was maintained to ensure accurate attendance records. For example, a child was observed to leave early at 12pm. This was recorded immediately in the attendance book.
- There were no flexes or cables observed that were accessible to the children. For example, cords on Christmas tree lights were adequately secured, rolled, and tied.
- Cleaning agents and medication were stored safely out of the reach of children. In addition, prescribed medication for children was labelled clearly with the child's name.

Infection Control:

- Lunches which were brought from home were labelled and stored in the fridge to prevent spoiling of perishable goods contained within the children's lunchboxes.
- Pedal operated bins were in the care room and sanitary area.
- There was warm water, soap, and paper hand towels available at children's level in the sanitary area to ensure hygienic handwashing. Handwashing was observed to be completed regularly in the service such as before mealtimes and after using the toilet.

Administration of Medication:

- A clearly written individual medical care plan was available to enable staff to identify and accurately administer medication and treatment when required. From discussion staff were familiar with individual care plans in place for children.

Fire Safety:

- On the day of inspection, it was observed that all fire emergency exit doors were clear from obstruction. This helps ensure the safe effective evacuation of children and staff in the event of an emergency.

Part VIII - Notifications and Complaints

Regulation 32 – Complaints

- (1) A registered provider shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies-
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.
- (2) A registered provider shall ensure that-
- (a) a record in writing is kept of a complaint made to the provider in respect of the pre-school service, and
 - (b) the complaint is duly dealt with in accordance with the provider's complaints policy.
- (3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (2)(a) shall-
- (a) include the nature of the complaint and the manner in which the complaint was dealt with, and
 - (b) be open to inspection on the premises by an authorised person.

Compliance Information

- (1)(a)(b)(c) The service had a complaints policy which detailed the steps to be followed in the event of a complaint being made.
- (2)(a)(b) A record of any complaints for 2023 was requested and reviewed by the inspector. The registered provider confirmed that there was only one complaint received by the service in 2023, this record was reviewed and contained all the information required.
- (3)(a)(b) A written record of any complaints received in 2023 was available for inspection.