

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016KE004		
Name of Service:	The Montessori Children's Academy (Maynooth)		
Address of Service:	The Mews, Main Street, Maynooth, Co. Kildare		
Eircode:	W23 R1H1		
Name of Registered Provider:	Christina O Riordan		
Service type:	Part Time, Sessional		
Date of Inspection:	17/10/2023		
No of pre-school children:	AM	32	PM N/A
Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate Suite 7, Vista Primary Care Centre Child and Family Agency Ballymore Eustace Road Naas Co. Kildare, W91X38W		
Inspection undertaken by:	F. Maher and T. Duignan		
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

1. Pursuant to Part VI, Regulation 23, the Agency is supplied (no later than December 31st, 2023) with the information required to provide assurance that the service is compliant with the state required fire safety and building control measures.
2. In the interim and without delay you put in place a robust safety plan to ensure that the current absence of fire safety confirmation poses no risk to children who attend your service. This plan must be in written format and available for inspection.

Description of service

The Montessori Children's Academy provides sessional and part time care and education to children aged 2.5-6 years and opens between the hours of 09:00am - 14:10pm. The sessional times offered are, 09:00am - 12:00pm and 12:30pm - 15:30pm. The service is located on a side street in Maynooth town, and two pre-school rooms are provided, an outdoor play area is located to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

Eight people were present in the service on the day of inspection, this included the registered provider who arrived at the service at 10:05am, one administrator and six staff members working directly with the children. All staff members held recognised qualifications in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Framework of Qualifications.

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.

Additional Information

At the time of inspection this service has a condition attached to its registration. The proprietor has not provided confirmation to the agency that the premises is fire safe pursuant to Part VI, Regulation 23 of the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Regulations 2016. This issue was identified during the renewal of registration process and is currently being addressed by the early years inspectorate registration enforcement office.

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

(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),(b)

There was a designated person in charge and a named person to deputise as required.

The records of eight staff members employed and/or present in the service, including the registered provider, were reviewed.

(2)(a),(b)

Sixteen written and verified past employer references or references from a reputable source, in the absence of a past employer, were available in respect of eight records reviewed.

(c)

Garda Vetting disclosures were available for eight employed staff members including the registered provider.

(d)
Police vetting was available for three staff members who had lived in a state other than the State for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.

(4)
Seven members of staff employed and who work directly with the children whose records were reviewed held a major award at Level 5 or higher in Early Childhood Care and Education on the National Qualifications Framework.

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)
There were 32 children attending the service being supervised directly by 6 staff members during the inspection.

(2)
The minimum ratio of adults to children was adhered to during the day as specified in column (3) of Part 1 of Schedule 6.

(8)(a)
There were at least two adults on the premises at all times for the duration of the inspection.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 20 – Facilities for rest and play

(1) Subject to this regulation, a registered provider shall ensure that-

(a) having regard to the number of pre-school children attending the service, their respective ages and the amount of time they spend on the premises, there are adequate and suitable facilities for each child to play indoors and, where required by these Regulations, outdoors, during the day,

Compliance Information

(1)(a)

Both pre-school rooms were bright and spacious and equipped with low level tables and chairs to enable children sit comfortably for snack and tabletop activities. Montessori equipment and learning materials were displayed on accessible low-level shelving in each pre-school room.

There were well-defined spaces for each part of the curriculum such as, language, numeracy, art, crafts, and culture. Each of these areas featured shelves or display tables with a variety of materials from which the children could choose.

Roll out floor mats were used by the children where they brought their equipment and materials to work, and which defined their work space.

Comfortable rest areas were also available, and children were observed to use the spaces to rest/relax or take time to read.

The outdoor area was spacious and had defined areas of interest which included spaces for playground games, a geodesic climbing frame, an area with a large sand tray and plenty of sand and associative play equipment for the children to use, a poly tunnel which had containers of bricks, dolls, prams, cars and trucks and a covered area with seating to enable the children to eat outside or engage in table top activities. The ground surface was covered with an artificial grass carpet and this together with the covered areas ensured that the children were provided with daily outdoor play throughout the year.

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 service had a healthy eating policy in place and parents provided the morning snack for their child. Children were observed enjoying their snack at a time that suited them during the morning. Foods provided included sandwiches with various healthy fillings, fresh fruit pieces, crackers, cheese and yoghurts or fromage frais. Children had their own drinks of either water or fruit juice and fresh drinking water was available in the pre-school. In conversation with staff members, they advised they encouraged healthy eating practices with the children and planned an area of the curriculum around healthy foods and eating, including bone health and dental hygiene. Staff also advised they were very observant of any food provided that had the potential risk of choking and immediately halved or cut food into smaller pieces. Children were observed being supervised at all times in the snack area in Classrooms 1 and 2 when eating their snack.

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 main entrance door to the service was secured and controlled by staff to prevent children from exiting the service unsupervised and to restrict unauthorised persons from gaining access to the pre-school. All toys and equipment observed were in good condition and working order.

Staff completed daily indoor and outdoor environmental risk assessments to ensure the environment was safe prior to the children arriving to the service.

Infection Control:

The premises were maintained in a clean and hygienic condition and cleaning schedules were completed daily. Children's hands were washed before eating, following toilet use, outdoor and messy play. There was a supply of

thermostatically controlled hot water, liquid hand soap to support hygienic hand washing. Foot pedal operated bins were available for the safe disposal of waste, used paper hand towel and tissues.

Administration of Medication:

Medication was not given at the time of the inspection and staff members were aware of the procedures to be followed to administer medicine safely to a child if required while attending the service.

A comprehensive care plan was in place for one child with a specific medical need.

Fire Safety:

Regular monthly fire drills were carried out and records maintained. All fire exits were unobstructed.

Outing:

Outings do not take place from the service; this was confirmed by the staff in the service.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. An unguarded light bulb was observed hanging above the snack table in Classroom 2; this had the potential to cause a risk of injury to a child/children in the event of the bulb shattering.

Infection Control:

2. There were no paper hand towel dispensers to hygienically dispense the paper for hygienic hand drying in the sanitary areas of Classrooms 1 and 2. The paper towel was observed in single sheets in containers in these areas; this was a risk of cross infection.

Fire Safety:

3. There was no signage indicating the fire exits in Classroom 2; this had the potential to cause confusion during an emergency evacuation as there were two potential exit points from the room.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

General Safety:

Corrective Action

A protective lampshade has been purchased and installed.

Preventive Action

None received.

Infection Control:

Corrective Action

Inadequate response received.

Preventive Action

None received.

Fire Safety:

Corrective Action

Fire exit signage has been installed.

Preventive Action

None received.

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

Photograph x 1

Infection Control:

None received.

Fire Safety:

Photographs x 3

Summary Comment

Following review of the corrective action submitted for point 2, infection control, the response did not address the noncompliance and further information was requested 22 November 2023 to provide clarity to the stated action. 27 November 2023, no response has been received.

The requirement for Regulation 23 has not been met.

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)

Persons with first aid responder (FAR) training were immediately available to the children attending the service.

(2)(a),(b)

The first aid boxes were suitably equipped and stored in conspicuous positions in the pre-school rooms and were immediately available for the children at all times.