

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LK004
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Name of Service:	Dooradoyle Montessori School IMEB
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Address of Service:	St. Paul's Centre, Dooradoyle, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 R20T
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Name of Registered Provider:	Eilish Mulcahy
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Service type:	Sessional
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Date of Inspection:	26/09/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	13	PM	No.
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla, Early Years Inspectorate, Estuary House, Henry St, Limerick
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Inspection undertaken by:	E Browne
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Title:	Early Years Inspector
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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

This sessional preschool service is located in a residential setting close to Limerick city. It provides a sessional service for children aged 3 -6 years for 3 hours a day between the hours of 08.45 to 11.45 am Monday to Friday. The service operates from St Pauls Centre on the premises of St Pauls Church which is also close to the local primary school. The children have access to a designated pre-school room, sanitary accommodation and access to a green space located to the rear of the service.

Staffing

The registered provider and 2 two adults were present on the day of inspection working directly with the children. All the adults working in the service have completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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 announced 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 registered provider was the person in charge and a named person to deputise as required was available.

- (b) The designated person in charge was on the premises when the inspector arrived.
- (c) There was 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 the registered provider and the staff members working in the service.
- (2)(a) and (b)
- Two written references from past employer and other sources were available for the registered provider and the two staff members. The registered provider of the service had validated all references that were on file.
- (c) Garda Vetting disclosures were available for the registered provider and the 2 staff members and were dated within the previous 3 years.
- (d) Police vetting was not required as no staff member had lived in another state for a period of longer than 6 consecutive months.
- (4) The registered provider and the staff working directly with the children attending the service held awards in Early Childhood Care and Education ranging from Levels 5 to 8 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.*
- (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.*

Compliance Information

- (1) There were 13 pre-school children aged 2.5 years – 5 years being supervised and cared for by the registered provider and 2 staff for the session. The adult child ratio was correct in the premises.
- (3) The registered provider has ensured that the minimum adult child ratio was maintained at the service. The adult/child ratio on the day of the inspection was greater than the minimum requirements of 1:11.

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) The records for 13 preschool children were examined and each record contained the required information from (1) (a) – (i).

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:

The healthy eating policy for the service detailed the requirements for parents to supply healthy snacks for their children. The staff sat at the tables with the children and supervised them at all times. Drinking water was available throughout the session if a child needed a drink. The children were given as much time as they needed to eat their food and have their drinks.

Children were encouraged to wash their hands at appropriate times such as after toileting and before eating. Hand washing was facilitated in the sanitary accommodation with a supply of hot and cold running water and liquid antibacterial soap. Children toileted independently with assistance given to those who needed it.

The children enjoyed freedom of movement within the setting. Children were observed to lead their own play and choose different play/learning activities. Learning journals/scrap books for each child with photographic evidence of activities completed will be available for parent's information. Staff modelled positive behaviour for the children and the children were encouraged and supported throughout the session by their key person staff. The staff interactions with the children were positive and caring and the atmosphere within the setting was calm and unhurried.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The physical and material environment of the service was carefully planned and organised to ensure each child's learning was facilitated. The playroom had many interest areas that were well developed and included montessori equipment/materials, a home corner equipped with a play kitchen, dolls and prams, an imagination play area with dolls houses, a rest /relaxation reading corner with soft furnishings located next to a book stand, an art/craft area with lots of paper and painting materials. A sensory tray filled with pasta shells, buttons, sand and water provided opportunity for sensory development and for messy play. Language, literacy skills and development of speech and vocabulary were fostered using stories, and conversation. Low level tables and chairs were used for dining at break time and for many tabletop activities at all other times.

Children had access to a variety of materials and equipment which were rotated to suit the changing abilities and emerging interests of the children, and the changing curriculums plans throughout the year. All the play materials and equipment were organised to be visible and easily accessible to the children on open low-level shelving.

The outdoor areas of the service offered the children space for physical play, for movement and for exploration.

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. The staff had a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities in relation to ensuring that adequate, suitable and nutritious foods and drinks were provided to each preschool child attending the service.

The children have their food and drink at mid-morning and these were provided by the parents. On the day a variety of foods and drinks were observed such as bananas, strawberries, grapes, vegetables, cheese, yogurts and breads. Water was the main drink of choice provided by the parents. Additional work on healthy eating will be planned with the parents and the children for the coming months.

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) The registered provider and 1 staff member held current certification in first aid for children.

(2)(a) A first aid box was stored in the playroom.

(b)The first aid box was available to the children attending the service if required.

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 fire fighting 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)(a) The fire drills were practiced on a monthly basis. The last recorded fire drill took place in June 2024.
- (b) The firefighting equipment was serviced on an annual basis, most recently in October 2023 and a record was maintained of the number, type and maintenance of the firefighting equipment. The smoke alarms in the premises were serviced in March 2024.
- (4) A notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of a fire was displayed.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

Adequate insurance was available to cover the number of children who attended and had an expiry date of 27/11/2024.