

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016LK005
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Name of Service:	Niki O'Connell Montessori School AMI
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Address of Service:	Newtown, Monaleen Road, Castletroy, Co. Limerick
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Eircode:	V94 V211
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Name of Registered Provider:	Niki O'Connell
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Service type:	Part Time
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Date of Inspection:	24/11/2023
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No of pre-school children:	AM	30	PM	15
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tuala Early Years Inspectorate, 2 nd Floor Estuary House, Henry Street, Limerick.
Inspection undertaken by:	M Riordan
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

Niki O Connells Montessori School is a private, purpose-built Montessori school in operation since 1998. The school provides sessional and part-time education and care to preschool children. The service operates from 8.30am to 13.30pm and the setting can cater for a maximum of 45 children. It operates from 2 well-resourced Preschool rooms. Preschool Room 1 caters for the younger children aged from 2 to 3 years and Preschool Room 2 caters for children aged 3 years and over. The service has 2 outdoor play areas, one located at the side of the building and a second large garden area to the rear of the premises.

Staffing

The registered provider is the owner and manager of the school. There are 4 additional adults employed to work at the service. All adults have the appropriate qualifications in Early Years Care and Education. One staff has completed the LINC programme, a course designed to improve inclusivity for all children in the Early Childhood Care and Education programme. All staff engage in ongoing professional development training.

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/ safety/ premises and facilities. 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, 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) The registered provider was the designated person in charge of operating the service and was present on the day of the inspection. There was a named person available to deputise in her absence if needed.

(b) During the period of the inspection, the registered provider was present, and the staff roster indicated that this person or her deputy were available on the premises each day.

(2)(a) Two written and validated references from past employers were available for the registered provider and each staff member employed to work at the service.

(b) All references were from past employers or from other reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures received from the National Vetting Bureau of An Garda Síochána were available for the registered provider and each staff member employed to work at the service.

(d) International police vetting was not required for any person working at the school.

(4) All adults working at the service held an appropriate qualification in Early Childhood Care and Education.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) The registered provider ensured an adequate number of adults were working directly with the children at the service. On the day of the inspection there were 30 preschool children present with 4 adults during the morning session. In the afternoon there were 15 preschool children present with 4 adults. The adult child ratio was above the required ratio.

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:

- (a) the name, position, qualifications and experience of the person in charge and of every other employee, unpaid worker and contractor;*
- (b) details of the class of service and the age profile of children for which the service is registered to provide services;*
- (c) details of the adult:child ratios in the service;*
- (d) the type of care or programme provided in the service;*
- (e) the facilities available;*
- (f) the opening hours and fees;*
- (g) the policies, procedures and statements the service is required to maintain in accordance with Regulation 10;*
- (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) The registered provider ensured that a record in writing was kept of the following information in relation to the service:

- (a) The name, position, qualifications and experience of the persons in charge.
- (b) Details of the type of service in operation and the age profile of children for which the facility is registered to provide services.
- (c) Details of the adult: child ratios in the service.
- (d) The type of care or programme provided in the service. This was outlined in detail on the services website.
- (e) The facilities available.
- (f) The opening hours and fees.

- (g) A record in writing was maintained of policies and procedures required in accordance with Regulation 10 and were found to be comprehensive and detailed.
- (h) Details of attendance by each pre-school child daily.
- (i) Rosters were maintained on a daily basis and available for inspection. These correlated with the numbers that were present on the day of inspection.
- (j) The service had a medication administration record template available that could be used in the event of a child requiring medication to be administered at the service.
- (k) Details of any accident, injury or incident involving a pre-school child attending the service.

Part IV – Information and Records

Regulation 17 – Information for parents

A registered provider shall ensure that a parent or guardian of a child proposing to attend the service is provided with the information referred to in subparagraphs (a) to (g) of Regulation 16(1).

Compliance Information

The registered provider held an education night for all parents prior to registering a child to attend the service. At this meeting all information in relation to the school was explained in detail to the parents. Parent teacher meetings were also held at the service. This provided the parents of the children an opportunity to discuss how their child was progressing at the school. A detailed website for the service was also available where staff could learn about each staff working at the school.

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

BASIC NEEDS:

There was a healthy eating policy in place in the service and parents were advised to provide children with nutritious snacks each day for break time. Childrens drinks were stored out of their bags and were accessible to them at all times during the session. A second nutritious snack was provided at 12 midday to the children attending until 1.30pm.

Children had unrestricted access to the toilets located adjacent to both preschool rooms. Hot water, liquid soap and paper hand towels were available for handwashing. A wash hand basin in the preschool rooms were used by all children for washing of hands following outdoor play and before lunch time. A change of clothes was accessible for all children if needed. Protective clothing was available for the children to wear when playing outside in wet weather.

Tissues and wipes were always reachable to the children and all waste was disposed of properly in lidded bins. Soft furnishings were available in the library corner of the rooms. These area was designed to make it an attractive space for children to rest and relax, if tired during the session.

Outdoors the children had access to a well-resourced sheltered play area and to the back garden for more active play space.

PHYSICAL AND MATERIAL ENVIRONMENT:

The service operates from 2 large well-designed classroom. Furniture and shelving in both rooms was child sized to encourage independence and reduce unnecessary assistance from adults. Low level tables and chairs occupied the centre of both rooms and were used for dining at break time and for many tabletop activities at all other times. Lots of play materials were displayed and grouped into the following areas, Language, Arithmetic, Practical life, Sensorial, Language, Geography, Science, Nature, Music and Art. All children were observed working independently, choosing their own activities, and pursuing that activity for as long as they wished. Staff were observed moving from child to child or working with small groups assisting and guiding children as needed.

Education posters with colourful charts and children's art and craft works were displaying at children's eye level on the walls.

The outdoor play area provided space for more active play opportunities. The garden was safe and secure with fully enclosed fencing and hedging surrounding the area. Children had access to swings, slides, a playhouse, decking area, a large timber pirate ship. The younger children had access to a sheltered play area at the side of the premises. This area was planned to provide children with lots of messy play and imaginative play opportunities.

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) There were 3 staff on duty at all times who had completed first aid responder training.

(2)(a) There was a well-stocked first aid box located on the premises.

(b) The first aid box was readily available and easily accessible if required.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

The registered provider had a current insurance certificate which outlined that adequate insurance was available for 46 preschool children to attend the service. The insurance cover commenced on the 28th of March 2023 and expired on the 27th of March 2024.