

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier: TU2016SO001

Name of Service: Miss Mary's Montessori School

Address of Service: Auburn Cottage, Scarden, Strandhill, Co. Sligo

Eircode: F91 N977

Name of Registered Provider: Mary Clyne

Service type: Sessional

Date(s) of Inspection: 12/03/2024

No of pre-school children:	AM	11	PM	7

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, TUSLA Child & Family Agency, Markievicz House, Barrack St, Sligo, F91 XC84
Inspection undertaken by:	L Costello
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

Description of service

This Sessional service is located in a rural setting in Strandhill, Co. Sligo. A service is provided to children aged between three and six years of age. The service is open from Monday to Friday with a morning session between 9:00 and 12:30hours and an afternoon session running from 13:00 to 16:00hours. The premises is a single storey, purpose built Montessori classroom attached to the home of the registered provider. The children have access to an enclosed well-developed outdoor play area that is accessible from the building via a large sheltered outdoor space known as the “outdoor classroom”.

Staffing

The service is operated single handled with a second person available in case of emergencies.

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.

The inspection focused on an examination of compliance under regulations 9, 11, 15, 19, 23, 25,26 and 28. These findings are outlined within the relevant regulations within this report.

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.

Compliance Information

(1) (a) (b).

There was a designated person in charge of the service.

(2)

There were no new employees to the preschool service s confirmed by the registered provider since the last inspection on the 23.01.2021.

(c)

Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for all staff in the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

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 an adequate number of adults working directly with children attending the preschool service. There was one adult working directly with 11 children in the morning of the unannounced inspection.

(3) The minimum ratio of adults to children ratio were provided on the day of the inspection in accordance with the required ratio considering the ages of the children and the length of time each child spent in the service.

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.*

(3) A record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) or (2) shall be open to inspection on the premises by-

- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child but only in respect of the record relating to that child,*
- (b) an employee who is authorised in that behalf by the registered provider, and*
- (c) an authorised person.*

(4) A registered provider shall ensure that a record in writing referred to in paragraph (1) is retained for a period of 2 years from the date on which the child to whom it relates ceases to attend the service.

Compliance Information

(1) (a-i)

10 records of the preschool children attending the service were reviewed. The required information including the authorisation to collect the child, details of illness or special needs of the child, emergency contact and record of immunisations were fully completed for each child.

(3) (a)

The records in writing were available for inspection by the early years inspector.

(4)

The person in charge confirmed that the records are retained for the required period as set out in the regulations.

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

(1) A registered provider shall, in providing a pre-school service, ensure that-

(b) appropriate and suitable care practices are in place in the pre-school service, having regard to the number of children attending the service and the nature of their needs.

Compliance Information

(1) (a)

The children in the preschool were participating in circle time on the arrival of the inspector to the service. The curriculum focus for the day was continents of the world and the children had displayed their project work on the walls of the service. Today's topic was Aisa, and the staff member took some time teaching the children about the different animals that live in Asia. There was a strong focus on nature and geography as evidenced by the resources in the care room, including books, jigsaws, animals and picture of the world.

The care room had a range of play-based materials and specialist Montessori equipment that offered stimulation, exploration, and imagination. These were positioned at an accessible level on open shelving which nurtured independence, facilitated choice, and encouraged curiosity, spontaneous play, and movement. The library provided an extensive number of books which supported the children's language and development.

The outdoor area of the service provided an alternative environment for children, this area allowed for children to develop their gross motor skills with swings, slides, balance beams, mud kitchens and playhouses.

On the day of inspection, a parent had visited the service as part of a Drama initiative. The children participated in various dramatic exercises to build confidence and improve language development and self-expression.

(1) (b).

The children's independence was promoted in the Montessori. Children were independent in using the toilet and the staff member prompted as required to remind children about hand hygiene. Children were observed to wash hands prior to mealtimes and after using the toilet. The children were observed to be independent in various personal tasks, such as putting on shoes and coats.

Snack time was a shared experience where meals were shared. Parents took turns in sending in sharing boxes. One child had responsibility for setting the table and passing around the shared platters of food, so the children could choose what they wished to eat. On the day of inspection, the snack provided included a fruit platter, crackers and cheese and bread rolls.

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 preschool was secure on the inspectors unannounced arrival to the service.
- All cleaning products in the care rooms were stored on high level shelving out of the reach of children.
- Materials and resources were maintained in a good state of repair.

Infection Control:

- Tables were observed to be cleaned prior to mealtimes and after messy play and snack times in all care rooms.
- Children were observed to wash their hands regularly including before snacks and meals.

Fire Safety:

- Fire doors were unobstructed throughout the service.
- Fire evacuation procedures were clearly displayed in the care rooms.

Non-Compliance Information

General Safety:

1. A slide in the outdoor area had numerous broken steps which could pose a risk of injury to the child.
2. A septic tank in the outdoor area was exposed to the preschool children. This tank had a black pipe leading out of the tank to another area posing a trip hazard to the preschool children.
3. In the outdoor 'orchard area' the waste bins and oil tank were accessible to the preschool child.
4. A ripped yellow chair with exposed foam required to be removed from the outdoor area.

Infection Control:

5. A blue wooden table and 5 chairs in the Montessori room had evidence of chipped and flaking paint which impeded effective cleaning of materials.
6. There was no foot operated pedal bins for the safe disposal of waste throughout the service.
7. Children were observed to dry their hands with shared cloth towels which posed risk of cross infection.

Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective & Preventive Action

General Safety:

1. The slide has been removed.
2. Fence made around septic tank. Fences have been built with treated wood so we will check regularly.
3. Barrier put in the prevent children from going down near oil tanks.
4. The chair has been removed.

Infection Control:

5. The 5 blue chairs have been painted, The blue table has been painted. Wear and tear if furniture in classroom, will be checked more regularly.
6. There are now two foot pedal operated bins for the disposal of waste.
7. The tissues dispenser has been filled. A good supply of tissues purchased so dispenser doesn't run out

Supporting documentation submitted

General Safety:

1. Documentary evidence
2. Photographic evidence
3. Photographic evidence
4. Photographic evidence

Infection Control:

5. Photographic evidence
6. Photographic evidence
7. Photographic evidence

Summary Comment

The actions submitted by the person acting on behalf of the registered provider, to address the non-compliances found on inspection in relation to regulation 23 have been reviewed by the inspectorate. This regulation is now compliant and will be reviewed on next inspection.

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) On the day of inspection, the staff member on duty was trained in first aider response (FAR) training with an expiry date of the 26/03/2024.

(2) (a) (b).

The first aid box located on a wall in the care room out of reach of the children was fully stocked and available to the children at all times.

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.
- (2) The record referred to in paragraph (1) shall be open to inspection by-
- (a) a parent or guardian of a pre-school child attending or proposing to attend the pre-school service,
 - (b) an employee, and
 - (c) an authorised person.
- (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) (b)
- The registered provider ensured that monthly fire evacuation drills take place in the service.
- A record of all firefighting equipment is recorded in the service Health and safety folder with a maintenance date of the 22.05.2023.
- (2) (c) This information was made available for review on the day to the inspector.
- (4) Fire evacuation notices were displayed in conspicuous locations throughout the preschool service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was evidence of insurance for 22 preschool children in a sessional service up till the 27/11/2024.