

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2016WD003
--------------------------	-------------

Name of Service:	Park Montessori School
-------------------------	------------------------

Address of Service:	Knockboy, Ballygunner, Waterford, Co. Waterford
----------------------------	---

Eircode:	X91 K0EN
-----------------	----------

Name of Registered Provider:	Ruth White
-------------------------------------	------------

Service type:	Full Day
----------------------	----------

Date of Inspection:	17/10/2023
----------------------------	------------

No of pre-school children:	AM	28	PM	11
-----------------------------------	----	----	----	----

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Tusla Child and Family Agency Early Years Inspectorate Ely hospital Ferrybank Wexford
Inspection undertaken by:	E Mc Garry
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 Childcare Act 1991 (as inserted by Section 92 of the Child and Family Agency Act 2013).

Conditions if applicable	Not applicable
---------------------------------	----------------

Description of service

This full day care service is operated from a purpose-built premises in Ballygunner on the outskirts of Waterford city. The registered provider moved from her existing service to this address in September 2023. The service is open from 8.30am to 5.00pm and offers an Early Childhood Care and Education programme (ECCE) in the morning from 9.00am to 12.30pm. The service consists of two large early years rooms, Casa one and Casa two, eight children's toilets, six children's wash hand basins, a separate staff toilet, an office, nappy changing facilities. There are two large outdoor play areas to the rear and the side of the service. The service is also registered to provide a school age service.

Staffing

The service employed a total of five staff, including the registered provider. There was a third level student also available to assist the qualified staff. Certificates of qualification were available for all staff members working directly with the early years children. All staff held at least an award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 on the National Qualifications Framework.

Methodology

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of early years services in Ireland. The Childcare 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:

Regulation 9 Management and Recruitment (1) (2) (a) (b) (c) (d) (4),

Regulation 11 Staffing levels (1) (2),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare, and Development of the Child (1) (a)(b),

Regulation 22 Food and Drink,

Regulation 23 Safeguarding Health, Safety, and Welfare of the Child,

Regulation 25 First aid (1) (2) (a) (b),

Regulation 26 Fire Safety (1) (a) (b) (4).

Regulation 28 Insurance.

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) (b)

The registered provider was the designated person in charge on the day of the inspection and remained in the service for the duration of the inspection.

(2)

Following a discussion with the registered provider and on review of documentation, it was established that there were five staff employed in the service. All five staff files were reviewed on the day of inspection.

(a)

There were four written and validated references available on file from past employers.

- (b)
There were six written and validated references available on file from reputable sources.
- (c)
There was Garda vetting available on file in the service for all five staff members.
- (d)
Police vetting was available on file for one staff member who had worked in a state other than Ireland for a period of longer than six consecutive months.
- (4)
All staff working directly with the early years children held a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 5 and above 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.*
- (4) Subject to paragraph (5), where a registered provider contemporaneously provides-*
- (a) a sessional pre-school service, and*
 - (b) a full day care service or a part-time day care service, or both, the minimum ratio of adults to children applicable for the duration of the sessional pre-school service in respect of the children attending that service shall be the ratio specified in paragraph (3).*

Compliance Information

(1)

There was at all times an adequate number of staff working directly with the early years children.

(2)(4)

At 10.30am there were 28 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff. At 2.20pm there were 4 children aged from 2 to 6 years in the care of 5 staff. There was one third level student in the service who was available to assist the qualified staff on the day of inspection.

The registered provider was available to assist across the rooms as required. The minimum ratio of adults to children was always maintained for the duration of the inspection.

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 registered provider ensured that each child's learning, development, and well-being was facilitated within the daily life of the service. Children were engaged in a variety of appropriate activities during the inspection including eating together, enjoying circle time, and learning through tabletop activities which were led by the staff members.

Children were encouraged to be independent appropriate to their age and stage of development, for example, children were encouraged to be independent when using the toilet. They were given help when required.

During activities staff used opportunities to extend children's learning and development. Staff were observed to be constantly engaged with the children in their care. Children who required additional support were well cared for and included in the group's activities. For example, one child was observed to sit on a staff members lap for extra comfort and support during circle time.

The materials and equipment available included a large range of developmentally appropriate Montessori equipment, arts and crafts materials and other open-ended materials which were well organised and easily accessible to children. There was a dress up area with a range of costumes available. There was a large wooden dolls house, a supply of art materials, and a jigsaw of the solar planets.

1(b)

The registered provider ensured that appropriate and suitable care practices were in place. Nutritious and varied food was offered to children. Parents provided all snacks, and hot meals are re-heated from the onsite kitchen. Mealtimes were relaxed and observed to be a positive social experience for children as staff engaged with them, helping them when required. One child was given ample time to sit and enjoy their hot meal with support from a staff member.

There were nappy changing facilities in the service. Older children were supported to use the toilet independently and were encouraged to wash their hands afterwards. Care was given to children's appearance. They had their faces cleaned after their dinner when required.

There was a small room available for children over two to sleep in if required. There were two cosy rest area in both early years rooms.

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. This policy includes the schedule of meals and snacks required for children attending on a sessional, part time and full day care basis.

Non-Compliance Information

The children who were attending the service on a part-time basis were given one snack when two are required as outlined in the service healthy eating policy.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Staff have been reminded of the services healthy eating policy which includes the schedule of meals for all children attending the service. Children attending on a part-time basis will be given one meal and two snacks. Children attending the full day care service will be served two meals and two snacks. The schedule for the provision of meals and snacks in the service has been shared with parents in the information handbook.

Evidence submitted.

Healthy eating policy and schedule of snacks and meals served in the service.

Summary Comment

The registered provider's response and evidence submitted meets the requirements of the childcare act 1991 (Early Years Services) regulations 2016.

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 registered provider had taken the following steps to ensure the safety of the children attending the service. Access to the service was gained through the front door which was made of glass. There was a call bell also in operation at the front door. Staff could see who was seeking to gain access to the service. The openings of the windows were restricted with appropriate restrictive opening devices. All radiators were thermostatically controlled. The fire doors were not obstructed.

Infection control:

The service was newly constructed and appeared to be clean and in good repair on the day of inspection. Cleaning templates were available in the service to document the regular cleaning of the early years room and toilet areas. There was a large fridge available in the service to store the food which was provided by the parents. All sinks for hand washing in the service were equipped with warm thermostatically controlled water, liquid soap, and pedal bins. The temperature of the hot water flowing from the wash hand basin in the nappy changing area was recorded at 36°C on the day of 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)

There was a person trained in first aid for children immediately available to the children attending the early years service.

(2)(a)(b)

There was a suitably equipped first aid box stored in an easily accessible position on the premises and was available to the children attending the early years service.

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 firefighting 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)

There was a record of fire drills that had taken place in the service. The last recorded fire drill had taken place in the service in September 2023.

(b)

There was a record available on file stating the firefighting equipment was last serviced in August 2023, and the smoke alarm in February 2023.

(4)
There was a notice of the procedures to be followed in the event of fire displayed in a conspicuous position in the main entrance of the service.

Part VI - Safety

Regulation 28 - Insurance

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

Compliance Information

There was insurance in place to cover the children who were present on the day of inspection.