

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

Pre School

TUSLA Identifier:	TU2018FL507
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Name of Service:	Cherry Blossom Montessori Castleknock
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Address of Service:	89 Pecks Lane, Castleknock, Dublin 15, Co. Dublin
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Name of Registered Provider:	Fiona Bowe
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Service type:	Part Time, Sessional
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Date(s) of Inspection:	19/11/2024
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No of pre-school children:	AM	26	PM	N/A
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Address of the Early Years Inspectorate:	Early Years Inspectorate, Child and Family Agency, Unit 4&5 Nexus Building Block 6A, Blanchardstown Corporate Park, Dublin 15
Inspection undertaken by:	E. Saini and S. Murray
Title:	Early Years Inspector and Inspection and Registration Manager

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

Cherry Blossom Montessori Castleknock is a part time service located in a residential area of Dublin. A service is provided to children aged between 2 and 6 years old. Cherry Blossom Montessori Castleknock is registered to provide two sessions from Monday to Friday, a morning session with a staggered entry from 08:45-14:00 and an afternoon session from 12:15-15:15. On the day of inspection the service was operating a part time service from 08:45-14:00 hrs and a registered School Aged Childcare service from 13:45-16:15hrs. The service participates the Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE) scheme.

Staffing

The registered provider works in the service providing direct care to the children and employs a team of 7 staff members. The registered provider and a team of 5 staff members were working directly with the children on the morning of the inspection.

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/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.

A sampling process was used to assess compliance under regulation:

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

Regulation 11 Staffing Levels (1)(2) (8),

Regulation 19 Health, Welfare and Development of child (1) (a),

Regulation 21 Equipment and Materials

Regulation 22 Food and Drink

Regulation 23 Safeguarding, Health, Safety and Welfare of child

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 inspectors wish 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
- (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 service had a named person in charge and a person to deputise when required.
 - (b) A review of the roster showed that a named person in charge is available at all times in the service.
 - (c) The service had a clear management structure in place, and staff members were able to identify their roles and responsibilities.
- (2) The files for the registered provider and 7 core staff were reviewed.
- (2)(a) The registered provider had 13 written and validated references for 8 members of staff employed from past employers.

(b) The registered provider had 3 written and validated references for 3 members of staff employed from reputable sources.

(c) Garda vetting disclosures had been obtained for 7 staff members, the registered provider and for a family member who may be present at the premises during the operation of the service. The service also demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring services to renew Garda vetting every three years.

(d) Police vetting was available for 2 adults who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of six months or more as an adult.

(4) Documentary evidence was available to show that the registered provider and 7 adults who worked directly with the children held 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.

Non-Compliance Information

(2)(d) Police vetting was not available for two staff members who had lived in a country other than Ireland for a period of more than 6 months as an adult.

Corrective & Preventive Action submitted by the Registered Provider

Corrective Action

(2)(d) Email correspondence sent by the registered provider to staff members, requesting police vetting from their home countries.

Preventive Action

(2)(d) The registered provider confirmed that one staff member has an appointment in with the Embassy to obtain police vetting. The second staff member has sent the registered provider her notice period and will no longer be working in the service.

Supporting documentation submitted

(2)(d) Copy of email correspondence from the registered provider requesting Police Vetting.

(2)(d) Copy of email correspondence of invitation of appointment to the Embassy.

(2)(d) Copy of resignation letter received.

Summary Comment

(2)(d) Under Regulation 9, police vetting remains outstanding for one staff member. It is acknowledged that action has been taken to rectify this non-compliance.

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.

Compliance Information

- (1) The registered provider ensured that an adequate number of adults worked directly with the children during the operational hours of the service.
- (2) The correct adult to child ratio was maintained at all times as there was five adults to nineteen children aged between 2 -6 years of age.

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*
- (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)

Basic needs:

- The outdoor area was predominately used during the session, the covered area provided shelter and did not impact the engagement of activities and playtime when it began to rain.
- The service operated a rolling snack time. Children were observed sitting in a specific area with their peers when they required their snack. This was observed to be well managed and staff chatted amicably with the children as they ate.

- Childrens behaviour was managed through age and stage appropriate positive strategies. In the pink room staff were observed to support children to develop strategies around conflict resolution. For example, children were given clear guidelines on what kind of behaviours are appropriate and the importance of sharing with each other.
- There was a 'Birthday wall' in the pink room. This supports children sense of identity and belonging within the service.

Supporting relationships around children:

- The children appeared comfortable and confident in their environment and were observed initiating play activities and exploring the care room as well as the outdoor area of which there was a free flow of activities.
- The staff discussed planning of the curriculum with the inspector, with the theme, on the day of inspection being 'Trains and Hot Chocolate'. The staff were preparing the children as they were partaking in an outing the following day so in preparation for this excursion, activities were available that reflected the train journey. A circular tray was available which contained a wooden train set, and at circle time a story about trains was read to the children.
- The children were fully engaged in activities during the inspection, a good balance of child led play and planned activities were observed, for example, the inspectors were offered imaginary beverages in the café that the children had set up. Staff advised that the wooden playhouse where the café was located changes periodically in accordance with their observations regarding the children's emerging interests.
- The presence of a family tree with pictures of the children's family members demonstrated that staff within the service are familiar with the children and their family's promoting identity and belonging.

Part V - Care of Child in Pre-school Service

Regulation 21 – Equipment and materials

A registered provider shall ensure that there is adequate and suitable furniture, play and work equipment and materials available on the premises of the pre-school service.

Compliance Information

- All activities were readily available in see through containers on easily accessible low-level shelves for the children.
- There was a cosy area in each room available consisting of seating and books for the children to rest and relax in as required.

- The outdoor area was an extension of the preschool rooms and was very well resourced with play materials and equipment. The surface was covered with an artificial surface and a lean to protect the children from the sun during sunny days or rain during inclement weather. The outdoor area was sectioned into a covered area with tables for eating and tabletop activities and a larger area for play. The children had access to a range of toys and equipment outdoors which included sensory play equipment, bikes and trikes, a large sturdy tepee structure, rocking toys and balance equipment. A well-resourced kitchen, dolls house with supportive equipment, small world toys and animals were among the array of equipment available for the children to play with.
- The classrooms were a bright and an inviting play space to enable children to explore their environment, with play materials on low level accessible shelves which promoted independence of choice for selection of materials.
- The range of play materials and equipment to include a large variety of Montessori materials were suitable to the age and stage of development of the children attending the service enabling exploration and develop their play opportunities.
- The furniture provided in each care room was low level and suitable to the needs and age of the children. There were a sufficient number of low tables and chairs to accommodate children whilst they played and ate in the care rooms or in the outdoor classroom.
- A cosy area with chairs, cushions and a soft rug were present for rest and relaxation.

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 children brought their own lunches consisting of sandwiches, crackers, fruit, vegetables, yogurts, and drinks from home. On the day of inspection, the inspectors observed children enjoying a rolling lunch where children were invited to eat their lunch at a time suitable to them. Staff monitored the rolling lunch to ensure all children had opportunity to eat.
- Lunch bags were examined prior to being distributed to check for any allergens present as some children enrolled have specific nut and fruit allergies.
- The service had snacks provided if children required. Additional fruit and snacks were available should child choose to eat an additional snack.
- Children’s own drinks were available within their reach throughout the session should they feel thirsty at any stage, and children were encouraged to take plenty of drinks.

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 service had a secure entrance area to facilitate the supervised entrance and exit of visitors and children.
- Attendance records were present, accurate and completed for both children and staff members.
- Cleaning materials were appropriately stored away out of reach of children.
- An outings policy and risk assessments were available for outings undertaken.

Infection Control:

- The classroom was well ventilated with windows open during the inspection.

- In the sanitary facilities, there was thermostatically controlled warm water, paper hand towels and liquid soap available for effective handwashing.
- Bins were available throughout the service.
- The staff and children were observed to wash or sanitise their hands at appropriate times throughout the session, for example – after sneezing, before lunchtime, and after toilet visits.
- Hand sanitiser and boxes of tissues were available in supervised areas.