

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report School Age Services

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TUSLA Identifier:	TU2020DR023SA
Name of School Age Service:	Poppins Montessori
Name of Registered Provider:	Caroline Hosey
Address of School Age Service:	2 Highfield Drive, Marley Grange Estate, Rathfarnham, Dublin 16
Eircode:	D16 C924

Date of Inspection:	5 December 2024
Number of school age children present during inspection:	PM 18
Registration status:	Registered
Conditions (if applicable):	Not applicable

Address of the Early Years Inspectorate	Brunel Building, Heuston South Quarter, Saint John's Road West, Dublin 8. D08 X01F
Inspection undertaken by:	A. Bradshaw R. Duff
Title:	Early years inspectors

Authority to Inspect
Tusla's 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).

Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Report

School Age Services

Description of Service:

Poppins Montessori is a combined service operating a sessional morning service and a school age service in the afternoon during the academic year. It is based in an urban residential area in south Dublin. The younger children have the use of the Montessori room, and the older children have a dedicated space in the registered provider's kitchen. The children have access to a garden at the rear of the building.

The service is registered to accommodate up to 27 school age children from the age of 4 to 12 years old. On the day of the inspection, there were 18 children in attendance. The service is registered to operate from 1.30pm to 5.30pm.

Staffing:

Five staff are employed in the service, including relief staff members and the registered provider who works directly with the children.

Additional Information:

The inspection was completed as a result of information received by the inspectorate.

Legislation

Tusla's Early Years Inspectorate is the independent statutory regulator of School Age Services in Ireland, and its role is to promote and monitor the safety and quality of school age care provision in accordance with the following legislation:

- The Child and Family Agency Act 2013, Part 12.
- Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022.
- The Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018).

A school age service means any early years service, play group, day nursery, crèche, day-care or other similar service which:

- caters for children under the age of 15 years enrolled in a school providing primary or post-primary education,
- provides a range of activities that are developmental, educational and recreational in manner, which take place outside of school hours, the primary purpose of which is to care for children where their parents are unavailable, and
- the basis for access to which is made publicly known to the parents and guardians of the children referred to in point (a) above.

It is the responsibility of a registered provider to ensure the safety and well-being of school age children and the above legislation authorises Tusla to assess compliance with the Regulations.

Inspection Methodology:

The inspection is unannounced to assess compliance with the Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) Registration of School Age Services Regulations 2018 (S.I. 575 of 2018), Child Care Act 1991 (Early Years Services) (Registration of School Age Services) (Amendment) Regulations 2022, and the Child Care Act 1991, Section 58 as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

The findings on inspection are gathered through a triangulation method, including:

- Information obtained through examination of documentation.
- Direct observation.
- Discussion with relevant staff.

This inspection aims to determine the extent to which service is appropriate for the care, safety, and wellbeing of children in accordance with the regulations cited above.

Inspection findings are documented in the School Age Services 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 corrected the non-compliance and how they will prevent them 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 CAPA 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.

Acknowledgements:

The inspectors wish to acknowledge the co-operation of the children, registered provider, and staff who were present on the day of the inspection.

Summary of Findings:

- Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures(1)(a)(b)(c);
- Regulation 9(1)(2)(4): Staffing levels;
- Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service;
- Regulation 12: Insurance;
- Regulation 13: Complaints(1)(a)(b)(c);
- Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013.

On inspection, the registered provider was found non-compliant in:

- Regulation 8: Garda Vetting(1)(d)(2)

Conclusion and follow up actions: The action and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan has adequately addressed the non-compliance.

Regulation 8: Vetting disclosures

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service 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.*
- (2) The procedures specified in paragraph 1 shall be carried out prior to any person being appointed, assigned or allowed access to or contact with a child attending the school age service.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspectors reviewed five staff files.

- (1)
- (a)(b) The required validated references were available for all staff members.
- (c) Five staff members including the registered provider had Garda vetting disclosures available for review. The service demonstrated compliance with the Early Years Inspectorate Regulatory Notice requiring Garda vetting to be completed every three years.

Regulatory Requirement not met

- (1)(d) The documents reviewed demonstrated police vetting was required for one staff member. This was not available on the day of the inspection.
- (2) Evidence was available to demonstrate that the relevant vetting disclosures were not carried out prior to any person working directly with the school age children. Police vetting for one staff member was not available to the inspectors.

Corrective & Preventive Action Response submitted by the Registered Provider

(1)(d)(2) The registered provider submitted a copy of the required police vetting and stated that all employee files are up to date.

Summary of Findings

The action and evidence submitted by the registered provider, in their corrective and preventive action plan has adequately addressed the non-compliance.

Regulation 9: Staffing levels

- (1) Subject to this Regulation, a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is at all times an adequate number of competent and suitable adults on the premises while the service is operating.*
- (2) Without prejudice to paragraph (1), a registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that there is a minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children at all times while the service is operating.*
- (4) A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the school age children attending the service are appropriately supervised at all times.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

The registered provider ensured the appropriate staff levels were in place. Three staff members were caring for 18 school age children. Discussion with the staff members and a review of the staff and children's attendance records from 4 November 2024 to 5 December 2024 demonstrated the minimum ratio of 1 adult to 12 children was maintained during that period. On the inspector's arrival, 10 children were completing their homework with the staff member offering support where it was required.

Regulation 10: Policies of a school age service

A registered provider of a school age service shall ensure that the policies and statements specified in Schedule 6 are in place for the service.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The inspector reviewed the service's policies and the statement of purpose and function. The policies and statements contained information as per Schedule 6 of the regulations to support staff in their practice. The Dropping off and collection policy had been reviewed and updated on 1 December 2024.

Regulation 12: Insurance

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

Regulatory Requirement Met

The service was insured from 28 March 2024 to 27 March 2025 for a maximum number of 27 school age children. On the day of the inspection, 18 children attended the service.

Regulation 13: Complaints

- (1) A registered provider of a school age service other than a childminding service shall ensure that the complaints policy of the service specifies—*
- (a) the procedure to be followed by a person for the purposes of making a complaint in relation to the service,*
 - (b) the manner in which such a complaint shall be dealt with, and*
 - (c) the procedures for keeping a person who makes such a complaint informed of the manner in which it is being dealt with.*

Regulatory Requirement Met

(1)

The complaints policy detailed the procedures for a child, a parent, or a staff member making a complaint. Details included how verbal or written complaints would be dealt with including timelines and the appeals process.

On the day of the inspection, staff members informed the inspectors that there were no complaints received and minor issues were dealt with informally.

Documentation was available to demonstrate communications between the service and the parents regarding an incident which had recently occurred.

Child Care Act 1991, Section 58(G) as amended by Part 12 of the Child and Family Agency Act, 2013

It shall be the duty of every person providing an early years service to take all reasonable measures to safeguard the health, safety and welfare of children attending the service and to comply with regulations made by the Minister under this Part.

Regulatory Requirement Met

The staff were noted to supervise the children in their care. During school collections, the staff members were observed to each have a colour-coded list of the children who they were responsible for collecting. The children were seen to go to a designated point in the schoolyard to meet the staff member to who they were assigned. The staff member described how this was a new practice in recent days and how they had discussed the changes with the children who have adapted quickly. Staff members were noted to count the children in the schoolyard, and again at the gate to the service. Once the children arrived in the building they were checked in and this was recorded in the attendance book. The staff member discussed how a new procedure is also in place to inform parents via a text message that their child has arrived from school at the service. These text messages were shown to the inspector as evidence.

The registered provider discussed how important partnership with parents is to all the staff within the service. Evidence of this partnership with parents was demonstrated by two-way communication through email and text messages by both the registered provider and the parents of the children attending the service.

Due to a recent incident in the service, the registered provider implemented changes in the daily procedures. They informed all parents of the changes and the reason why they were being introduced. Parents replied with supportive comments and indicated that they were happy to comply with the changes including signing their child out when collecting them from the afterschool service. The inspector reviewed samples of these communications and observed parents signing the attendance book when collecting their children.

At 3.45pm, ten children in the Montessori room were observed playing in different groups with small world materials, for example, cars and garages, a doll house and furniture and dinosaurs. An older child who had completed their homework in another room came to the room to spend time with their “best younger friend”. There were two staff in the room at this time.

Four older children were working on their arts and crafts in another room, while the remaining children played in the adjacent garden, one staff member was supervising this group.